d.d. Mr. & Mrs. A.B. Gillett

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RUSTICUS LOQUITUR

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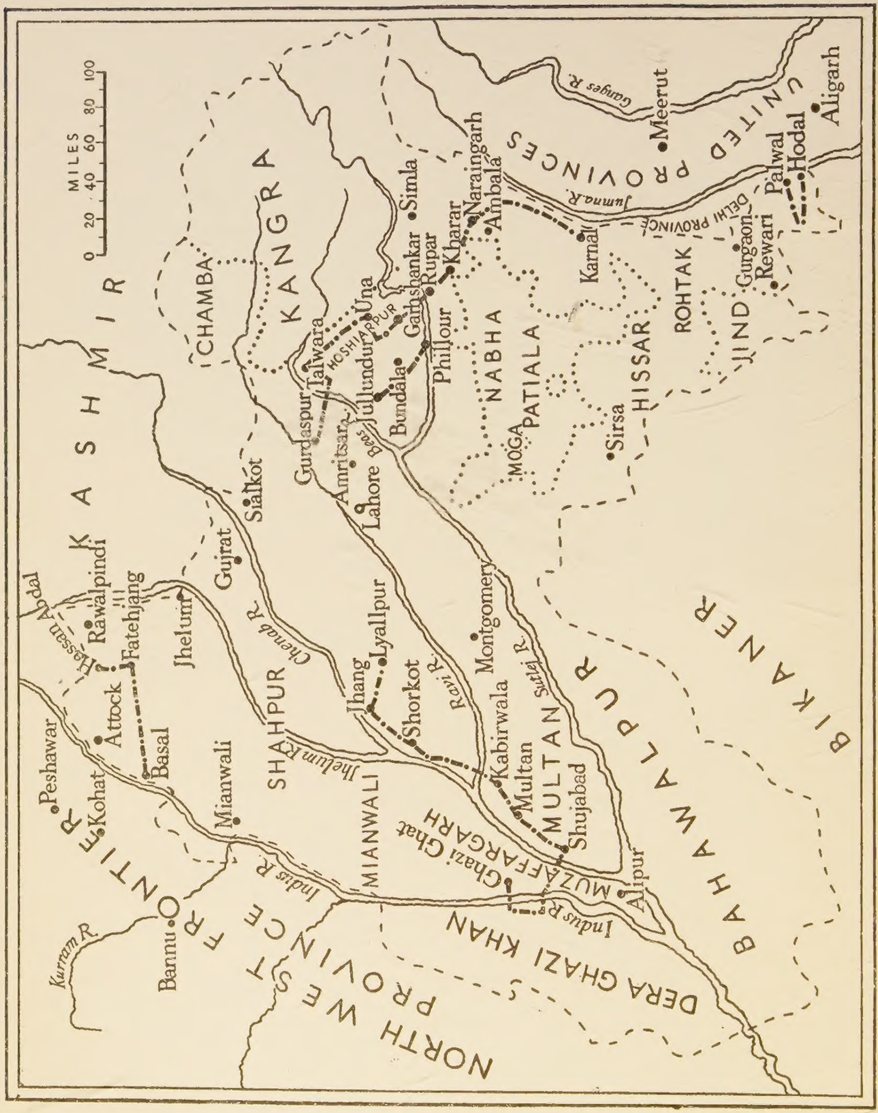

MILES
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KASHMIR
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Ganges R.
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HOSHIARPUR
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Jullundur
Bundala
Phillour
Gurdaspur
Amritsar
Beas
Lahore
Sialkot
Gujrat
Hassan Abdal
Rawalpindi
Fatehjang
Jhelum
Attock
Peshawar
Kohat
Basal
Mianwali
SHAHPUR
Chenab R.
Jhelum R.
Jhang
Lyallpur
Shorkot
Ravi R.
Montgomery
Kabirwala
Multan
MULTAN
Sutlej R.
Shujabad
MUZAFFARGARH
Ghazi Ghat
Indus R.
Alipur
MIANWALI
Bannu
Kurram R.
NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE
DERA GHAZI KHAN
BAHAWALPUR
BIKANER
NABHA
PATIALA
MOGA
Sirsa
HISSAR
Karnal
ROHTAK
DELHI PROVINCE
JIND
Gurgaon
Rewari
Palwal
Hodal

RUSTICUS LOQUITUR
or THE OLD LIGHT AND THE NEW IN THE PUNJAB VILLAGE

By MALCOLM LYALL DARLING
Author of *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, etc.*

> ‘Come inside India, accept all her good and her evil: if there be deformity, then try and cure it from within, but see it with your own eyes, understand it, think over it, turn your face towards it, become one with it.’
>
> RABINDRANATH TAGORE
> *Gora*, p. 103

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to deal with sides of village life left untouched or only lightly grazed in my former book, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*: for example, the peasant's relation to landlord, pir,[1] mullah, and priest; his supplementary means of subsistence; new developments in his farming; the social and economic position of women; emigration, housing, and rural sanitation; the village community and rural reconstruction. The book came to be written because last cold weather in the course of my official duties as Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Punjab, I undertook an extensive tour on horseback with the primary object of finding out what headway Co-operation was making in the countryside. The tour was designed to give me a bird's-eye view of the province as a whole and took me through the submontane belt at the foot of the Himalayas, the country bordering on Hindustan and Rajputana, the well-tilled but congested area between the Sutlej and the Beas, the prosperous canal colony of Lyallpur, the rainless and comparatively primitive tract along the Indus, and finally, across the northern uplands which look towards the Frontier. It fell into two parts, and, following linguistic and to some extent climatic division, I have called the one the eastern, and the other the western Punjab. Throughout I have sought to ascertain what the peasant does and what he thinks on each question, believing that this is an indispensable preliminary to all schemes for his betterment. This explains the title, for which perhaps a word of apology is due to my Indian readers. I chose it because it exactly expresses the standpoint of the book. The subtitle is due to a phrase constantly used by the more intelligent peasants I met in contrasting the old order and the new.

---

[1] Muhammadan religious leader.

As to the form of the book, there are, says Arthur Young, two methods of writing travels: 'to register the journey itself, or the result of it'. I have tried to combine both, giving in the first two parts the journey as it occurred from day to day, and in the third a brief summary of its results upon my mind. If beyond a few scattered references little is said on the political questions of the day, it is because they are of small interest to the peasant, who would probably endorse Sir Rabindranath Tagore's remark: 'Our real problem in India is not political: it is social.'[1] The Indian peasant stands for something more enduring than political forms. He represents a way of life as old as civilization itself. Though this life varies with climate, race, religion, and age, it has an underlying unity which makes peasants everywhere akin. To understand the peasant in one country is therefore a step towards understanding him in another; and it may almost be said that he is the real link between East and West. He is, too, the strongest link on the chain that binds the ages. What a Latin writer wrote of him over 1,500 years ago might equally well have been written of the Punjab peasant to-day: 'rusticam plebem, quae sub divo et in labore nutritur, solis patiens, umbrae negligens, deliciarum ignara, simplicis animi, parvo contenta, duratis ad omnem laborum tolerantiam membris; cui gestare ferrum, fossam ducere, onus ferre consuetudo de rure est.'[2]

In conclusion I must gratefully acknowledge all that was done to smooth my way by the many members of the co-operative staff with whom I came into contact on my tour, and also the great assistance rendered in the subsequent verification of doubtful points in the information given me. I have done my best to write with the fullest possible consideration of the feelings of those I met on my way, and I trust that, if unwittingly I have caused offence, it will be believed that no offence was intended. On the contrary, I appreciate keenly the patience and courtesy shown by all concerned in answering my innumerable questions. A word of special gratitude is due to my old colleague, Mr. C. F. Strickland, I.C.S. (retired), who was good enough to read the first two parts of the book. I am also under obligation to the Librarian of the India Office for placing at my disposal the many official publications that had to be consulted while the book was under preparation.

---

[1] *Nationalism*, p. 97.

[2] The peasant folk who are nurtured in labour under the open sky, patient of the sun, careless of the shade, ignorant of pleasure, simple in mind, and content with little; with limbs hardened to the endurance of every kind of toil, and well accustomed in the rustic way to carry the sword, dig the trench, and bear the pack (Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, lib. I, cap. 3).

M. L. D.

CAMBRIDGE,
16 *November* 1929.

CONTENTS

PART I: THE EASTERN PUNJAB

I. Hoshiarpur—the Una Tahsil . . . 1
Marriages, Education, and Hinduism.

II. Hoshiarpur—the Garshankar Tahsil . 27
The Difficulties of the Peasant Proprietor.

III. Ambala 55
Rajputs and Better Living.

IV. Karnal 92
Untouchability — Religious Teaching — Women—Cattle.

V. Gurgaon 120
Rural Reconstruction—Man, Woman, and Beast.

VI. Jullundur 160
Houses, Emigration, and Work.

PART II: THE WESTERN PUNJAB

VII. Lyallpur 192
The New Standard of Living.

VIII. Jhang 214
Landlord, Money-lender, and Pir.

IX. Multan 251
Landlord and Tenant.

X. Muzaffargarh and the Indus Riverain . 276
The Old Standard of Living.

XI. Attock 292
Landlord and Tenant, Arbitration and Mullahs.

PART III: DEDUCTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

XII. The Money-lender, Landlord, and Pir—The Old Light and the New . . 323
XIII. The Standard of Living, Women, and the Peasant's Means of Subsistence . . 345
XIV. Religion and Economics in the Indian Village 364
Glossary 387
Index 391

PART I: THE EASTERN PUNJAB

I. HOSHIARPUR—THE UNA TAHSIL

Marriages, Education, and Hinduism

December 3rd. GURDASPUR *to* MUKERIAN

The Crossing of the Beas

I set out this afternoon on a hireling mare to ride to Karnal, nearly 300 miles away. She is so sluggish and in such poor condition that it does not seem possible that I should ever get there. We reached the Beas at sundown and had a noble view of the Daulah Dhar, the great rampart that on the map separates Kangra from Chamba but in reality seems to separate heaven and earth, for rising over 15,000 feet from the plains it looks like the outer wall of Valhalla, the abode of gods and heroes. The Beas, too, speaks of heroes, for it was the river that stayed Alexander. For three days he strove to make his men adventure farther; but it was July, the very middle of the hot weather, when even the boldest spirits flag. River after river had been crossed, first the Indus, then in rapid succession Jhelum, Chenab, and Ravi, all in flood, and the Jhelum in the teeth of fierce opposition. One can well imagine how, when the weary perspiring hoplites saw yet another river to be placed behind them and make retreat more dangerous, their morale gave way and all with one accord declined to go farther. To-day the river had the modest proportions of the cold weather, but with the setting sun reflected in its many-coloured surface it wore its full beauty, and it is always the most beautiful of rivers. We crossed it with our ponies in a large high-sterned broad-bottomed boat of such rude and simple construction that one can hardly doubt that the boats Alexander saw, and perhaps used, were of the same pattern. On the far side we found a group of dismounted horsemen waiting to receive us as we stepped ashore into Hoshiarpur. Hoshiarpur is a district remarkable for the smallness of its holdings, the goodness of its mangoes, and the intelligence and litigiousness of its people. The smallness of the holdings compels many to seek their fortunes abroad. The Rajput joins the army; the Sikh Jat does the same or emigrates, and as many as possible—more probably than from any other district—enter Government service.

Life in the Riverain

We had much pleasant talk on the road, the kind of talk that in India is always at its easiest under an open sky. We came to a newly built village where two boys clad only in loin-cloths were wrestling in the last sunlight, while their elders sat by making thatch out of the *Sarkhanda*[1] grass which grows abundantly along every river in the Punjab. The village had been built to replace one washed away by a summer flood. One of those with me said that his village had been entirely swept away last year. I asked what they had all done. Eight families had gone off to start life elsewhere, but the rest had rebuilt their houses a little farther from the river and were cultivating what remained of their lands. Life in the riverain is precarious, and there must be few who at one time or another do not suffer from the devastating floods caused by a monsoon deluge.

Supplementary Occupations

Holdings in the tahsil (Dasuya) are minute, but unfortunately there is no subsidiary industry of any importance to counteract this. Some once tried silkworms, but gave them up. Others keep poultry, but very few, as the zemindar[2] thinks it derogatory to sell eggs. A certain number do carting, and at harvest-time many migrate to the canal colonies to cut the wheat or pick the cotton. In the Sikh tract the Jat enlists and is better off. Every village there, it is said, has five or six peasants who do money-lending. In this country to be prosperous is to be a money-lender, and there is little choice between being bloated or bled. So was it, too, in medieval France. 'In our days', wrote a French theologian of the twelfth century, 'there are few who are not either usurers or beggars,' and in words which might have been written of the India of to-day he added, 'except those who enjoy definite salaries.'[1]

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[1] *Saccarum munja.*

[2] In the Punjab, any owner of land: the word should be noted as it recurs frequently.

Pirs, Prayers, and Pilgrimages

Being amongst Muhammadans, we talked about pirs.[2] An educated Pathán with me said that five or six came every year to his village, a place of about 2,000 inhabitants. His father used to give the one he dealt with Rs.5 every visit and entertain him as well, but he had discontinued this because the pir did nothing to deserve it. He has not made this change in any irreligious spirit, for like a good Muhammadan he says his prayers five times a day and has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The fivefold prayer takes about 1½ hours a day, and each time the same formula is said over and over again (on the last occasion seventeen times) and always in Arabic, so that few understand what they are saying. So too with the Koran. This must be read in Arabic, for every word was dictated by God, and if translated there may be variations in sense. Many mullahs have learnt it all by heart and are spoken of with respect as 'háfiz', but few understand it and still fewer can expound it. The Pathan said that his pilgrimage to Mecca (in 1924) took four months and cost Rs.1,000. Had he gone third class instead of second, it would not have cost more than Rs.500 or 600. The money was well spent, for during the whole of the pilgrimage his mind was released from family and earthly cares and set solely upon the unseen. On their return some pilgrims like to be called 'Háji', but to him it suggested a wrong spirit.

Changes

As the Pathan was over forty, I asked him what changes he particularly noticed in his middle age. When he was young, he replied, 90 per cent wore khaddar or homespun; now hardly 10 per cent do this. The mill-made cloth is preferred, since it is finer and can be bought ready-made. A few women in these parts still spin, but men have never done this and regard it as entirely a woman's task. Mr. Gandhi's movement will, therefore, never be popular. Since the war there has been a definite rise in the cultivator's standard of living, both in clothes and food. For instance, more vegetables are eaten; formerly, people ate only turnips and greens (*ság*), but now radishes and cauliflowers have come in. The greatest change, however, is in the mind of the cultivator. He has begun to see that his condition is bad and wants to improve it. The demand for Better Living societies to reduce marriage expenditure is an example of this. This expenditure has now almost reached breaking point. One reason for this is the high prices paid for brides. It is not uncommon for a Sikh Jat to pay as much as Rs.2,000, and even the Rajputs in the north of the tahsil, who have hitherto been strict on the point, are beginning to purchase.

---

[1] Quoted by G. G. Coulton in the *Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1926, p. 311.

[2] Muhammadan religious leaders: the word recurs constantly.

Owing to a riverain road which was all mud and water our pace was slow, and it was dark when we entered Mukerian; but the kindly constellations of the cold weather firmament, amongst them the Pleiades and Orion, shone clearly overhead.

[16 MILES]

December 4th. MUKERIAN *to* HAJIPUR

Marriage Expenditure

I attended a meeting of the Mukerian Co-operative Banking Union to-day. A strong wish was expressed for Better Living societies in order to reduce the great expenditure on marriages. A peasant proprietor of ordinary circumstances cannot hope to marry his son for less than Rs.1,000. It is now bad form to give unrefined, or only partially refined sugar at a wedding: there must be 'kand' or sugar of the finest quality. The ornaments, too, must be of gold, and the trousseau must contain at least one pair of silk garments for the bride. No one dares reduce his expenditure without the backing of a society for fear of what his neighbours will say. *A* attends the wedding of *B*'s son, which is done in the traditional style, and has not the face to ask *B* to a wedding done on much more economical lines. And where every one in the village attends every one else's marriage, reform is impossible, unless the majority agree to a common standard of style, entertainment, and show. In fact, village community life is still so strong that in matters of social custom the individual is powerless. As some one remarked, 'Alone we can do nothing, but together we can do everything.' Recently three peasants, feeling their helplessness, begged the local co-operative Inspector to start Better Living societies in their villages forthwith, because they were on the point of marrying their children and wished to be saved the ruinous expense of a conventional marriage. And they had reason, for in this district holdings are so small that it is next to impossible for a cultivator of ordinary means to marry either daughter or son without borrowing. Those who rode with me yesterday agreed that this was the root cause of debt; and to-day it was said that the cultivator would never get out of a money-lender's hands until, on the one hand, marriage expenditure was reduced and, on the other, thrift encouraged by, for example, the spread of Crop Failure Relief societies.[1] At present, even if he joins a co-operative village bank, as often as not he continues to deal with the money-lender, since societies cannot prudently advance the large sums required for marriages. As he is better at recovering his dues, the money-lender can afford to take the risk. Acting for himself only and pricked to effort by the fear of losing his money, he will dog a client more tenaciously and press him more hardly than the committee of an ordinary society.

---

[1] A new form of co-operative society, in which members at each harvest deposit one or two sers per maund, i.e. 2½ or 5 per cent, of their crop. The produce is sold to the society and the proceeds credited to each member's account, and he can only draw upon the latter when a harvest fails.

Our march to-day was a short one, which was fortunate, for the four camels provided for our baggage proved to be 'mast'[1]—one shook off his load and bolted—and it was some time before a bullock cart could be produced in their place. An orderly tells me that when he joined the department over twenty years ago, the Registrar used to tour with forty camels. Sic transit gloria mundi.

[9 MILES]

December 5th. HAJIPUR *to* TALWÁRA

Spinning

We are now in the country of the Dogras—the Rajputs who live at the foot of the Himalayas—and the change in physique was most marked at the meeting of the Hajipur Banking Union, which we attended. Most of those present were Hindus, small in stature, thin in body, and unhealthy in appearance. Amongst them was an emaciated Chamár[2] (the president of a bank) with two half-withered legs which barely supported him. About half were wearing khaddar, and it was said that 50 to 60 per cent of the women still spin, and that many grow a little cotton for the purpose.[3] Those who cannot do this find it cheaper to buy mill-made cloth. The idea of men spinning was ridiculed, partly because it was women's work and partly because men had no time. At present, for instance, they are busy pressing their sugarcane and preparing the ground for next year's crops.

Marriage Expenditure

As at Mukerian, there is much interest in the reduction of expenditure on social ceremonial. A year ago the Hindu Rajputs of 25 villages formed a committee which fixed a scale of expenditure, and the Hindu Jats of 36 villages have just done the same. But in neither case has any effort so far been made to enforce the scale. It was sorrowfully admitted that 40 per cent of the members of our credit societies still dealt with money-lenders, and all agreed that this was largely due to their heavy expenditure on marriages. A Rajput of ordinary fortune cannot expect to be married for less than Rs.800 or 1,000, and if he has to purchase his bride, the amount will be nearer Rs.2,000. A Pathánia Rajput from Hamirpur says that the selling of daughters by Rajputs has increased tenfold since the war, and that the higher clans, who in old days would never give their daughters in marriage to the lower, are beginning to do so for a price, which varies from Rs.500 to Rs.1,000. The new Kangra saying—Rs.100 for every year of the bride's age—merely exaggerates an undoubted fact. Widows, too, said the Rajput, grasping at their only chance of re-marriage, sell themselves through agents (*dalál*) to 'God knows who' in the plains. A happier change is that, owing to the increasing difficulty of employment, members of the higher clans who on social and religious grounds considered it wrong to plough in person have begun to do so.

---

[1] Suffering from a seasonal distemper.

[2] The Chamars are tanners and one of the lowest castes.

[3] In the same way flax is still grown in the hilly tracts of Austria.

On leaving Hajipur we set our horses' heads towards the high hills and entered the valley of the Beas, where it flows between the Siwaliks and the lower spurs of the Himalayas. A Hindu Rajput with us said that Rajputs will not cultivate vegetables, because it involves a social stigma. They depend therefore for their supply upon the Muhammadan Arain, whose womenfolk, basket on head, hawk them from village to village. The Rajput thought the peasant worked harder than before, but agreed with the others present that few worked from anything but necessity. 'When a man's hands are full,' he said, 'he takes his ease.'

Talwara is magnificently placed. Below its bluff is the broad stony bed of the Beas divided in two by a streak of blue, where the river rushes, and beyond, far away, is the whole range of the Daulah Dhar, now deep in snow to the waist. Strolling in the evening in the valley, I came upon a family of Gaddis preparing to settle down for the night with their sheep and goats, which they had brought down from the upper pastures of the Daulah Dhar to winter in the ravines of the lower hills. The Gaddis are mostly descendants of high caste Khatris[1] who centuries ago fled before the Muhammadan invaders to the hills of Kangra to escape the sword and the faith of Islam; and simple shepherds though these men were, 'homespun things, whose wealth 's their flocks,'[2] as they sat round the fire which was cooking their evening meal, one could see in their clean-cut features traces of more than pastoral descent. They are to take it in turns to watch all night, as last night a leopard got away with a lamb. Meanwhile, lamb and kid, wagging short but happy tails, were busy tugging at their dams, and the noise of their sucking lips mingled pleasantly with the voracious nibbling of the sheep. The sheep were new shorn and looked as white as the distant snows.

[9 MILES]

December 6th. TALWARA *to* DAULATPUR

To-day, with our baggage on six mules, we entered the Una tahsil by a stony road running through an unpeopled tract. We passed a few roadside shops, nearly all, even those devoted to piece goods and confectionery, kept by Brahmins. There was some sparse cultivation, and the young corn was coming up through the stones, which lay almost as thick on the fields as on the road. Towards Daulatpur, where the road crests the watersheds of the Beas and the Sutlej, the land is more fertile, and here and there the stones had been collected together into neat little piles dotted about the fields. These were the fields that bear two crops, and many were protected from the cattle that graze at will during the rains by thick hedges of cactus and thorn.

Schools and Education

Though we passed only an occasional hamlet, the air was full of the sound of music, drum, bugle, and trumpet, for this is a marriage season of the Hindus. Most of those we met were on their way to join a marriage party. One was carrying the present of a bed from an uncle to his nephew, and another a basket of sweetmeats: others were guests. We came upon a village school, where twelve or fifteen boys were waiting for their master, who had gone off for two hours, so they said, to have his midday meal. I suggested to them that they should play: this had not occurred to them. We saw another school, which had a half-acre vegetable garden miserably stocked with patches of onions and turnips. The watering was left entirely to the heavens, though there was a well 100 yards away. The Daulah Dhar and the hills of Jammu were in full sight. As usual—I have never found an instance to the contrary—the boys knew them only as the Himalayas (*Koh Himálya*), and had no idea either what they were called or what country they were in. Pointing to the Jammu hills, one of them said brightly—'Kashmir and Thibet', and another 'Afghanistan'.

---

[1] The most important merchant and trading caste in the Punjab.

[2] Crashaw, *The Shepherd's Hymn.*

The education of the rustic is full of difficulty. As every one knows, the peasant's object in sending his boy to school is to secure him admission to government service. A Rajput educational official of the tahsil says this is largely because service promises a regular income, whereas farming often leaves a man with no income at all. Here we have an echo of what the French theologian of the twelfth century said, that to escape being a usurer or a beggar one must have a definite salary. And I am also reminded of a peasant girl in the south of France who, after seeing the way her brothers worked on the land and how uncertain was their return, refused to marry a peasant and married a hairdresser instead, who at least earned something every week. The Rajput educationist said that in the Una tahsil there was hardly a matriculate working in the fields, a fact that the co-operative staff subsequently corroborated. The latter could mention only two matriculates who were cultivating their land as against twenty who lived idly in their villages, drawing their rents and doing nothing in return. Even more difficult is the case of the villager who has been to college. On his return to the village he is like a fish out of water. One such was riding with me three days ago and said that at first he had found life most irksome without any educated society and that it was some time before he was able to settle down. Another, a Sikh Jat, writes to me as follows:

> 'I left . . . College last week. Here I am back in the midst of original elements of my making, but I feel as an utter stranger. The people of the village look upon me as an intruder. I am adapting myself to the requirements of the place and situation by calling every old man "uncle" and every old woman "mother". I try to agree with the young when they praise the good qualities of the wine they illicitly brew at home. And I patiently listen to the cavilling of my neighbours. In fact I am behaving like a perfect hypocrite. I am trying to submerge my "Varsity" education into the life of a farmer.'

Yet another difficulty is the almost complete absence of religious teaching in the village. The Rajput said that in his case he got some when he was in the Government High School by attending the religious classes of the Arya school, but the ordinary villager got little or none, for few of the temple priests were literate.

Untouchability

Hinduism dominates the whole tahsil.[1] Owing to this, untouchability is still strong, more so than amongst the Hindu Rajputs round Hajipur, who have come under Muhammadan influence and are more in touch with the outer world. For most of the latter it is sufficient that untouchables should not draw from the common well, and it is only the old-fashioned who sprinkle themselves with water or perform ablutions when they come into chance contact with an untouchable. Indeed, when the sprinkling of water was mentioned at the meeting of the Hajipur Union, all present laughed as at some eccentricity or fad. But here it is taken seriously, and people sprinkle themselves if they are touched by a Chamár, a sweeper, or a Kabirpanthi weaver; and even baggage carried by an untouchable has to be sprinkled on arrival. Untouchables must either have wells of their own or get a Hindu to draw water for them, or, failing both, draw it from the village pond. In most villages a water-carrier attends the well morning and evening to draw for them and receives in return a payment of grain at harvest. But any one may draw for them and fill their vessels, provided he does not touch them. The curious thing is that Muhammadans are allowed to use the wells, though by mutual arrangement this is not done at the same time as the Hindus. Even more curious is the fact that at a marriage it is always the untouchable Chamar who carries the Rajput bride and bridegroom in their palanquins.[1]

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[1] Seventy-six per cent of the population is Hindu (*Una A. R.* 1913, p. 13).

[13 MILES]

December 7th. DAULATPUR *to* AMB

From Daulatpur we descended into the long fertile valley of Una, which in its richness and variety recalls the vale of Umbria, with sugar-cane in the place of the vine. The two-harvest fields round the villages were well hedged with cactus, but the one-harvest lands farther away were open. Again, all the shops we passed were in the hands of Brahmins, except one grocery owned by a Rajput who had made money at Basra; and as before, nearly every one we met seemed bound for a wedding. A woman accompanied by her husband was taking a present of clothes and sweetmeats to her brother who was going to be married, and another couple some home-made baskets.

Houses

The slate roofs of Rajput houses were shining on the slopes of the hills above the valley. Noticing this, one of my companions said that a slate roof was the mark of a rich man, as a thatched was the mark of a poor, and one of corrugated iron the mark of the man who was neither rich nor poor. Good houses are needed, for the rainfall of the valley is heavy (40 inches) and most of it falls in two months. But a good house cannot be had in a day: it is even sometimes a matter of years. As with David and Solomon, timber may be laid in by the father and the house built by the son. Every Rajput, when he retires from military service, now wants to have what he calls a 'hawadár' house, that is, one open to the air, as it is more healthy. This has had a marked influence upon the countryside, so much so that every village seems to have a new house or two. The first I visited was of kachha[1] construction with an upper story and a well-laid slate roof which cost about Rs.150. The rooms below had no windows at all, but the one above had seven and was all that a room should be—large, airy, and sunny. The house cost Rs.1,000 and had been built by a blacksmith who was in the army during the war.

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[1] 'The Chamar is the tanner and leather-worker of North-Western India. . . . In the east of the Punjab . . . he is the general coolie and field labourer of the villages' (H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes in the Punjab*, ii. 147).

In the next village I found a little colony of houses owned by six Rajput brothers. They were well thatched and remarkably clean, the latter because the women clean them daily. Two were new, and one of the two, built by a schoolmaster, though still unfinished, had already cost Rs.1,200. All, old and new, had two stories, the lower one for living in and the upper for storage. Curiously, the one below was dark and windowless, and the upper one airy. The fear of burglars and dacoits was responsible for the former. Grain was stored in wicker baskets of enormous size—St. Paul when let down from the walls of Damascus would have had no difficulty in getting into one of them. The six brothers form an undivided Hindu family. The advantages of owning property in common in a country of small holdings is obvious, but the system is proving more and more difficult to maintain, for in this individual age many wives wish to run their own household, and the mother of one child is apt to look askance at what has to be given from the common store to the mother of two. Also the decline of grinding and spinning leaves more time for quarrelling.

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[1] i.e. not made of stone or burnt bricks: the opposite of pukka.

Grinding

Each of these six houses had at least one spinning-wheel. I also saw grindstones, but these are only used when the weather is too dry for the local water-mill. Some one remarked that grinding kept women fit, but another said that not having to do it gave them more time for spinning and working in the fields. Everywhere, since leaving Gurdaspur, I have heard the same tale, that grinding at home is almost completely given up, now that the mill driven by engine or bullock is within general reach. This is deplored by many who urge that flour ground by an engine is not so nutritious, and that women are not as strong as they were, since two hours' grinding in the early morning is the best possible exercise for limbs and lungs. The women of the poorer folk suffer less, because they work in the fields, which the wives of the more prosperous do as little as possible. In their case even to have grindstones in the house may reflect on their izzat.[1]

The Village Pond

In sad contrast to the houses was the village pond. It was covered with patches of green scum, in spite of which cattle bathe in it, people wash their vessels in it, and if there is no one to draw for them at the well, untouchables even drink it. All that redeemed it was a little shrine on its banks built by a carpenter.

Pardah

In both these villages pardah was of a very unofficial character. The smaller folk cannot afford to be very strict about it. On the other hand the bigger adhere to it closely, though a leading Rajput whom I met to-day says that it is weakening and that even in the village women begin to talk of giving it up. A difficulty is that the men are opposed to their being educated, believing they will be more difficult to control. In the town it is different: an educated man wants an educated wife. A day or two ago I had some talk on the subject with the Pathan whom I have already mentioned. Though his own family keeps pardah, he is opposed to it. It is bad for health, he said, and he quoted the Persian proverb—thief or invalid must a man be who is without work.[1] As women no longer grind and spin much less, they get no exercise. This affects them in childbirth: a woman who works in the fields suffers very little, but the pardah lady is laid up for some time. It is also a great advantage to the family if the wife can help her husband in the field, and on a small holding, if she does this, it is easier to make both ends meet.

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[1] A word for which there is no precise English equivalent, denoting, objectively, social position, and subjectively, *amour propre*. The word should be noted as it recurs frequently.

How the Small Holder makes both ends meet

How to make both ends meet is a great problem in a district where people are as thick upon the ground as they are in this tahsil. There are 865 to every cultivated square mile,[2] and the average area owned is less than five acres.[3] Holdings are so small that earnings from the land have to be supplemented by other resources. Before the war nearly five lakhs a year used to be paid to owners alone by way of pay, pension, and wages.[4] For the Rajput the commonest resource is enlistment, and this is as popular as ever, but there are many other forms of employment. Thus, in a village bank seen to-day one member was a schoolmaster, a second a policeman, a third a telegraphist, a fourth an infantryman, a fifth a cavalryman, and a sixth a watchman at Amritsar; a seventh trafficked with mules, an eighth traded in sheep and goats, a ninth managed a landed estate, and a tenth rang a bell at some wayside station. Most do not remain away for long and, as some one I met remarked, are satisfied if they can return with a trunk, a suit, an umbrella, and a lantern. It is a pity that, with so great a need, there has been no development of home industries. In the two villages seen to-day the men occupy their leisure by making rope out of hemp and baskets out of grass, but in both cases for domestic use only. In the same way webbing (*newár*) and string are made for beds. But the industry that might afford substantial help is left to others. This is the extraction of lac from the Ber tree.[1] Lac is an important by-product of the tract, but it is said that only five per cent of the peasant owners extract it themselves. The rest lease their trees to Muhammadans, mostly of the butcher caste though no longer butchers, who come from another part of the district. Want of time is the excuse, and it is the excuse nearly always given when the cultivator is asked why he has not time to do this or that.

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[1] *Adam bekár, duzd ya bimár.*

[2] *Una A. R.*, p. 12.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[10 MILES]

December 8th. AMB *to* CHURRU

Wedding Presents

The country to-day was liker Italy than ever, and the blue light on the distant hills of Biláspur and Nálagarh towards Simla added to the pleasant illusion. The road was beautifully shaded with mango, shisham[2], and mulberry trees, the latter golden with autumn. As before, most of those we met were hastening to a wedding. One party were barbers, all so smartly dressed in the semi-modern costume affected by the half-educated that I hesitated to ask who they were. They were taking a suit of clothes as a present to the bride. Another wayfarer was carrying a gaily painted bed, a present from some bride's father to the bridegroom. After him came a carpenter bearing on his head the wooden framework of the little bower which is set up in the courtyard of the bride's house for her to be married in—a mere bundle of sticks with two roughly made peacocks sticking out at either end. For the lot he will receive Rs. 1-4 or five four-anna pieces (to be auspicious it must be a multiple of five[3]), and after the ceremony he can carry it all away for use elsewhere.

Vegetables and diet

We passed a village where the cultivation is mainly in the hands of the lesser castes—Chhangs, Sainis, and others. Vegetables were prominent, amongst them potatoes, radishes, and sweet potatoes. These are sold in the neighbouring villages. This has been done for years, but with the increased demand their cultivation is spreading. This is the first case I have seen in this tahsil of vegetables being grown on any scale. As already noted, the Rajput will not grow them, considering it derogatory to his izzat to do so; but he is ready enough to buy them and is able to do so more freely than before, for lorries bring them out from Hoshiarpur. Opinion is uncertain as to whether the cultivator eats more than before, but all agree that his diet is both more varied and more tasty, the former because he eats more vegetables, and the latter because he flavours his food with more spices and ghi.[1] Some, too, think that he drinks more milk. But the staple diet of the tahsil is still wheat for three months, and maize for nine, not because maize is preferred, but because wheat is the money crop from which cash charges for land revenue, interest, marriages, and clothes have to be met.[2] Sugar-cane is also partly used for this, but few grow more than an acre, because it is a one-year crop and requires much labour and manure and, if it goes wrong, involves a heavy loss, which presses hard upon a smallholder. At every stage the smallholder thinks of what he *must* have—wheat, cotton, sugar, and cash—and perforce maintains a certain balance in his cultivation. An example of this is the practice of mixing wheat and gram in the same field. If rain is short, the gram thrives; if abundant, the wheat. Ploughing for the spring harvest is now in full swing, and in one field a woman followed the ploughman dropping the seed into the furrow behind him.[3] This is the usual way when wheat is sown late and moisture barely sufficient; but when, after the monsoon rains, it is abundant, sowing is broadcast.

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[1] *Zizyphus jujuba.*

[2] *Dalbergia sissu.*

[3] As to this see p. 246.

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[1] Clarified butter.

[2] In the same way the Austrian peasant who lives in the Alps makes his bread out of rye and sells his surplus wheat.

[3] I have seen the same thing in the south of France.

Indigenous Co-operation

Different forms of indigenous co-operation still survive in Rajput villages. When any one dies, every one attending the funeral rites brings with him a log of wood or the branch of a tree for the funeral pyre. At weddings, every guest presents a sum varying from one to ten rupees (*neondah*), and some a suit of clothes as well. If a near relation, he also brings a little food to help supplies. And in the village the whole birádari, that is, all who are connected by ties of kinship or caste, turn out to collect fuel and water, pitch tents for the guests, and see to their comfort. At harvest-time, following a custom called 'ábat', if a man cannot cut all his crop, he calls in his neighbours and in return for their help regales them in the middle of the day with a feast of 'kir' (rice boiled with milk), and perhaps also of goat. Where there are embankments to protect the crops from spasmodic torrents, they are repaired every year by common effort; so, too, the village ponds. And a watchman is often employed to guard the crops from damage and theft, and a herd to pasture the cattle. There are, however, no arrangements for putting up travellers. If there is a temple, they pass the night there; otherwise, they must look to the hospitality of some one whose house has a guest chamber (*baithak*).

A change in the times noted by one of the older Rajputs with me was the ignorance of the evils from which the British rescued the country. In his youth there were plenty of people to remind them of these and to tell them stories of the days when the cry would be heard—save your women and your jewels. But the new generation knew little of this.

This evening I found that my hireling mare, who requires all the heartening she can get—the syce says she has 'no breath'—had been given chopped straw instead of grass. Grass was not to be had, I was told.

'Well then, buy some millet.' Night fell and the orderly reported there was no millet either. I became more emphatic. Half an hour later he reappeared with grass. The incident recalls Kinglake's experiences a hundred years ago in Syria and his comment on the difficulties of travel in the East.[1]

[7 MILES]

December 9th. CHURRU *to* UNA *via* PAMJAWAR

An old Co-operative Society

I breakfasted this morning in full view of the Daulah Dhar, which was snowy and cloudless with blue depths below and a pale blue sky above. We left Churru at eleven and, as a Banking Union and an arbitration society had to be inspected on the way, we did not reach Una till six. The headquarters of the Union are at Panjawar, where a co-operative society was started in 1891 for controlling the common land of the village. This was the first society to be started in the Punjab, possibly in India, and it was done long before the first Co-operative Societies Act was passed. In 1922, when the land was partitioned, it was closed.

A good Landlord

For part of the way I was accompanied by a Hindu Rajput who is a keen co-operator and the best landlord in the tahsil. The Mian owns about 500 acres and, as some one remarked, would rather suffer himself than see one of his tenants suffer. The greatest service a landlord can render his tenants (said another Rajput) is to settle their disputes, and if he is trusted, they will bring them all to him. He can also protect them from oppression. Recently a money-lender refused to settle accounts with one of the Mian's tenants, wishing no doubt to retain him as a client. He would neither accept what was offered nor give a receipt. The Mian sent for him and had the matter settled in his presence. A good landlord also helps his tenants by giving them loans free of interest. The Mian does this and provides them with good seed as well. There his own interest is concerned, for he gets half the produce. He is therefore experimenting with different kinds of seed, and last year sowed three-quarters of his wheat land with new varieties.

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[1] *Eothen*, ch. xvii.

Religious Teaching

In the Punjab it is rare to find character without religion. The Mian is no exception. He does puja[1] twice a day, for three-quarters of an hour in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening—the result, he said, of his mother's teaching. In his village (2,500 inhabitants) there are three temples, but none of the temple priests gives any teaching. There is, however, a Brahmin whose family was long ago endowed with nine acres, in return for which he occasionally reads the Ramayan and the Shastras[2] and the story of Krishna to the assembled villagers. At Anandpur, in the south of the tahsil, lives a sadhu[3] of great sanctity who tours about the tahsil and the neighbouring district of Kangra reading the scriptures to the people. So respected is he that men carry him from village to village in a palanquin without charge. Most Hindus, said a Rajput with me, do not do puja every day; but in this haphazard way they get a certain amount of religious teaching.

Cattle and Religion

There is no prejudice against the castration of young live stock, but feeling is adamant on the subject of selling a cow or a bullock (but not a buffalo) when past work. To the Hindu the cow is sacred, and its offspring shares in its sanctity. At Panjawar any one who sold either would be forbidden 'huqqa and water', and, if possible, the animal sold would be bought back by the village. Others said the same was the case in their villages, and they defended the system on the ground that old stock could be turned out to graze and cost little to maintain. In saying this they overlooked the fact that, but for the heavy rain that fell last week, fodder would have been scarce, and even now grass is difficult to procure. Also these cattle have a habit of straying into the crops, out of which they have to be driven, often with blows which sometimes inflict serious injuries.

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[1] Worship.

[2] The holy books of the Hindus.

[3] A Hindu ascetic.

It is still the custom to put aside a little flour every day for the family cow, and on the first day of the month to give every cow and bullock a pound of flour and salt. One may guess that this was originally prescribed by wise Brahmins to keep the cattle fit, since most Hindu religious customs in the village have a utilitarian basis. Another custom of the same kind is to place a large block of salt by the wayside for passing cattle. This is done when the family astrologer discovers that the stars are adverse and threaten some calamity. A day or two ago we saw one of these blocks moist and shining in the sunlight.

Charms When cattle get ill, the people, with all their veneration of the cow, prefer to sprinkle flour round the village or to string up a charm enclosed in a potsherd across its entrance and drive their cattle beneath it rather than seek the advice of the vet. The belief in incantations and charms is still strong, and many would agree in the old Hindu saying that as a man gains the fruit of his labour if he has faith in it, so too will he gain benefit from mantras [1] if he has faith in them. Some families—a Sikh carpenter's in the neighbourhood was mentioned—know mantras of great efficacy for certain diseases which have been handed down from one generation to another. Others are endowed with strange properties, and a Rajput with me claimed that one in his village, with which he was connected by marriage, was impervious to snake bite; he had even seen this tested by a poisonous snake!

Suttee This Rajput told me some curious things. His mother died within two hours of his father, not because she was ill—she had been perfectly well and had nursed his father—but from sheer grief and longing not to be separated from him. After performing the necessary ablutions, she lay down beside him and covered herself with a sheet, and when a little later it was removed, she was dead—a case, it would seem, of spiritual suttee, the spirit consuming the body. He also related how during the war a Rajput woman of Kangra, hearing that her husband had been killed, shut herself up in her house, which the next morning was found burnt to the ground. A retired cavalry officer who was with us agreed with the Rajput that suttee would again become common if the prohibition against it were removed; and one who knows India well says the ideal of the true 'Sati'—the wife who prefers to die with her husband—is still strong.[1]

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[1] A saying taken from one of the holy books of the Hindus.

Sacred Trees

When his father died, the Rajput wound a thread 101 times round the pipal tree[2] in his village and poured 101 libations of water to it. Many do puja to the pipal in this way, and it is so sacred that it may never be cut down, and even when it falls it may not be used as fire-wood. This is probably a tribute to its long life and still more to its shade, for which all must hold it dear. In the hot weather it becomes the village hall, where men meet, talk, smoke, and rest; and, as some believe, the gods themselves sit in its branches and listen to the music of its leaves as they rustle in the breeze. The banyan is less sacred, but may also not be felled.[3] Ordinarily worship (*puja*) is done at the village temple and consists only of tinkling the temple bell and getting the priest to mark one's forehead with the red mark of the 'tika'.[4]

Priests

In Kangra, but rarely in Una, the temple priest (*pujári*) is generally literate and reads the Mahabhárat, the Shastras, and other holy books of the Hindus, in public once or twice a month; sometimes to men only, sometimes to women, sometimes to both together, according to what he is reading. The prohit or family priest, if he is to do his job, must be literate, since he has to cast horoscopes, advise as to auspicious times and seasons, take messages—a duty he shares with the barber—and consult and be consulted on difficult occasions. With the barber, he is the most important of those who serve the village, and receives the same amount of grain at harvest. In caste, of course, he is far superior.

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[1] The Rev. C. F. Andrews in *Young India*, 21 June 1929.

[2] *Ficus religiosa.*

[3] On the subject of tree worship Mr. Gandhi writes as follows: 'I find in it a thing instinct with a deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolizes true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom which . . . declares to us . . . the greatness and glory of God' (*Young India*, 26 September 1929). But Mr. Gandhi emphatically condemns all vows and prayers to trees.

[4] A mark made with unguents or with sandalwood ground in water. In the case of followers of Shiva, it is like a trident. When the priest is busy, the worshipper makes the mark himself.

An interesting point in regard to religious practice is that Muhammadan Rajputs still observe a number of Hindu customs, and even invite the pujári or temple priest to their weddings. But, unfortunately, there is a tendency for Hindu and Muhammadan to draw apart. A Muhammadan official who came to see me at Churru said that the greatest change in his time had been the increase of communalism. When he was a boy, his father, who was a doctor, had a bania as a friend. The two called each other 'brother', and he and the bania's son did the same. The bania's son, indeed, used to call the doctor 'father' and massage him as if he were his son. This would now be impossible. But the real rift in the valley is between Brahmin and Rajput—due to elections and their party-breeding spirit, says one; to a family feud, says another.[1] The result is: the valley is on fire (*ág lag-gya*). A saving grace is that co-operative societies open their doors to all castes, even to untouchables.

A 'backward' Valley

The vale of Una is divided by the Swan, a shallow tributary of the Sutlej. We crossed its gentle stream twice to-day, the second time as the sun set; and nothing could have been more beautiful than the light on the elephant grass, which shone like burnished gold, and the glow upon the distant Daulah Dhar, whose snowy rampart seemed on fire. A co-operative reclamation society near Una has planted a lot of elephant grass in the wide river-bed with much profit to its members; for not only is the grass valuable, but it protects the soil from being washed away. This is one of the crucial needs of the tahsil, since everywhere it is scarred with chos, wide torrent beds of shingle and sand, which grow wider every year and threaten in time to swallow half of it up. A pleasant feature of the valley, which a note I saw to-day described as 'backward', is the number of homesteads scattered about the fields, showing that here the farmer appreciates the advantage of living on his land. We passed one owned by a Rajput who had recently taken to growing vegetables and had a field of carrots—a sign that the old Rajput prejudice against growing vegetables is weakening. This the Rajputs with me confirmed.

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[1] More than one-sixth of the population consists of Brahmins (*Una Settlement Report*, 1915, p. 5).

As we entered Una, we met a party of potters who had come forty miles for the wedding of a young man amongst them, who was garlanded with flowers. Even the humblest in this country have their day of compliment and honour. Thirty-five had come with the young potter and were stopping three nights for the wedding. These large bridal parties are one of the causes of the high cost of marriage, and this wedding was expected to cost the bridegroom Rs.1,000. The day of compliment and honour is therefore dearly purchased.

[15 MILES]

December 10*th*. UNA *to* JAIJON

Feudal Dues

I was visited this morning by a revenue official who knows the tract well. He says that tenants now refuse to do any kind of unpaid labour (*begár*) for their landlords. In the old days they used to provide all the labour required at a wedding, and the Brahmin tenant had to do the cooking. They also had to take it in turn to do watch and ward of their masters' houses. One is reminded of the old boon system in England and the corvée in France. Now all these services are withheld, and even the Chamars refuse to shoulder the bridal palanquins without payment. Since they expect a rupee a day as well as their food, and six bearers are required for each palanquin, the bridegroom often rides a horse instead. Last year the Chamars passed a resolution at a meeting that they would no longer carry the patwári's[1] bundle of revenue records for nothing. When, therefore, the village record of rights had to be brought in the other day for the usual revision, the patwaris were obliged for the first time either to pay a Chamar for carrying them or to hire a camel or mule.

The Money-lender

A pleasant feature of the tahsil is that the money-lender is not much abused. The worst thing said against him is that he refuses payment when offered by the well-to-do and is harsh to the poor. On the whole, the Rajputs, mainly because soldiering puts them in a strong position both financially and educationally, are able to hold their own against him. Round Daulatpur, this is particularly so, and the common rate of interest is not more than 12 per cent. Round Amb, where fewer enlist, it is the usual 18¾ per cent (*paisa rupya*); and farther south round Anandpur, where few enlist at all, it is generally 25 or 37½ per cent, and the money-lender can do pretty well what he likes.

Marriage Parties

Leaving Una, we re-crossed the Swan and climbed the hills on the other side and got a view of the Himalayas from the hills of Jammu beyond the Ravi to the snow-capped Chor overlooking the Jamna, a matter of over 100 miles. Not even the Alps seen from Monte Motterone offer a finer view. We met many marriage parties on the road. One, consisting of humble water-carriers, had spent Rs.1,200; another, a party of Jat Sikhs, Rs.2,000; yet the bridegroom, a reservist in a khaki suit with immaculately creased trousers, had only 12 acres to live on. The Sikhs had two camels to carry their kit, while the water-carriers, more dashing, had a band of fakirs and two standard-bearers, each carrying a huge flag on a twenty-foot pole. It does not cost much to hire a band. One we fell in with, who were on their way back from a wedding, informed us that they had gone 30 miles for Rs.18. They had presumably been fed as well. With some of the marriage parties were palanquins containing brides completely concealed by red curtains. From one of these, which held the daughter of a water-carrier, came the sounds of sobbing; but it drew no attention from the merry-makers round.

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[1] The village accountant.

An up-to-date Astrologer

Since we were following one of the roads from the hills to the plains, those we met were many and varied. Amongst them was an aged family priest with a rosary returning from a Rajput's wedding, where he had performed the necessary ceremonies; and a Rajput bearing on his head a rainbow-coloured trunk full of clothes just bought at Amritsar; he had still 30 miles to go. A sight characteristic of the changing times was a pair of travellers walking side by side, one wearing black boots, and the other barefoot and carrying in his hands a pair of country shoes. Even more characteristic was a young Jotishi or astrologer sprucely attired and carrying over his shoulder a brown check blanket (*loi*). He had spent three years learning his art at a college in Benares. The times were greatly changed, he remarked. In the old days cultivators would not plough, sow, or reap without a word from the astrologer as to when they should begin. Now there were few like this; nor would people any longer accept magical interpretations. But fortunately there were many who wanted to know how they could get sons, what was best for their children, and whether and when they should start a case or a journey or embark upon an enterprise. These were still ready to follow injunctions based upon the influences of the stars, but the demand for 'science' was so strong that an element of it had to be mixed in with the rest. This he did judiciously, and he thanked God he was still able to make a living. A merry rogue.

High up on the spur of the hills, where the road begins its abrupt descent towards the plains, was a little serai built by a pious Brahmin for travellers, but alas the spirit of modernity had touched it: its walls were defaced with advertisements of cigarettes. Man claims a sense of beauty, but how readily he prostitutes it to the advertiser who comes cash in hand! And the Government of this great country with its disreputable telegraph form leads the way.

The descent to the plains lay through hills curiously like those between Rimini and Florence. Camel-coloured and bare of all but scattered bushes, as night fell on them, they seemed, like the advertisement above, to usher in a new world—arid, ugly, and lightless; and as I descended into the dark with the vale of Una behind me, I felt like Adam cast out of paradise.

[14 MILES]

II. HOSHIARPUR—THE GARSHANKAR TAHSIL

The Difficulties of the Peasant Proprietor

December 11*th.* JAIJON *to* MAHILPUR

A failing water supply

This morning we emerged from the hills on to the plains and re-entered the land of villages, with flat-topped mud-brick houses where man and beast live cheek by jowl, and with narrow twisting lanes in which the air stagnates and filth accumulates. After the woodland villages of Una, we seemed to have dropped a stage in civilization; yet the Garshankar tahsil, in which we now are, is much more 'progressive' than Una. Inhabited largely by Sikh Jats, 'there is hardly another tahsil in the province where the people have shown more resource, more energy, and more enterprise in improving the methods of agriculture at home and in adding to their resources by seeking new avenues of employment abroad.'[1] The density of population is 828 to the cultivated square mile, and the average cultivated area per owner less than 5 acres.[2] This pressure upon the soil is the result of a good rainfall (35 inches) combined with a widespread use of the well for irrigation. But unfortunately the water level is steadily sinking, and this is putting well after well out of use. In 1915 there were 3,371 wells in the tahsil and 160 in disuse. By 1928 the number of the latter had gone up to 774, an increase which is attributed almost entirely to the fall in the water level. At Rs.500 a well—a modest estimate—this means a loss to the cultivator of three lakhs of precious capital. With characteristic persistence the cultivator continues to sink new and deeper wells, in a desperate effort to remedy what may ultimately be irremediable, unless some means can be found of increasing the water supply, by, for instance, making a canal from the Beas. In Mahilpur, out of 61 wells 29 are out of action, and a Saini market-gardener tells me that the 26 wells in his village have all run dry, and that the vegetables in which the village specialized can no longer be grown: many therefore have left the village to join the army or find employment elsewhere. This is typical of the tahsil. Service in the army is not as common as in Una, but common enough, and, according to a Subedar-Major who rode with me, as popular as ever. Why did men enlist? Was it *shauq* or *bhuk*, keenness for soldiering or hunger? Hunger first, he replied, then *shauq*. In this there is no change from a hundred years ago. Says Sleeman: 'One son is sent out after another to seek service in our regiments as necessity presses at home, from whatever cause—the increase of taxation or the great increase in families.'[1]

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[1] *Garshankar, A. R.*, 1914, p. 1.

[2] In 1914 it was only four acres (*ibid.*, p. 4).

Emigration Riding with me was an inspector with whom I last rode nine years ago. I asked what was the greatest change that had taken place in the village since then. He replied, the number of zemindars for whom there is not sufficient employment. He attributed this to the continual subdivision of the land; in other words, to the increase in the population. In 1914 the Settlement Officer noted that holdings were 'substantially smaller than at last settlement', and we may guess that they are still smaller now. What with this and the drying up of so many wells, the tahsil offers a sad example of a tract where, without radical change, the peasant can no longer live on his land. This has driven hundreds, one might almost say thousands, to emigrate. In the last twelve months 1,371 applications for passports have been received.[2] Before the war the United States was the first choice and Australia the second, but now that these countries have virtually closed their doors to India, more go to Kenya and Fiji than anywhere else.

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[1] *Sleeman's Rambles and Recollections*, 1st edn., ii. 426.

[2] Information obtained from the tahsil.

At the meeting of the Banking Union to-day, which was attended by about thirty people (ten of them in coats of European style), we discussed whether emigration was a good thing. All agreed that it was, and that the returned emigrant was none the worse for having been abroad and nearly always made money, so that, as one person put it, instead of twenty persons starving twenty had bread. An old greybeard said he had spent 15 years of his youth in America and had willingly let his son go there; another, that in America there were no annoyances—a man could do as he liked—and there was plenty of land and plenty of money. Here, on the other hand, land was insufficient and money scarce. Here, too, if you were poor, you could not borrow, as no one would advance you money. There was general agreement that if the door to Australia and the States were opened again, there would be a rush to go. 'Only give our village passports', said a peasant owner recently to a member of my staff, 'and we will gladly give up our land here.' I suggested the new canal colony in Bikaner as an alternative, but it was objected that much capital was required to buy land there, and that the sandstorms were so violent that they smothered all the produce. Much the same was said 35 years ago when the Lyallpur colony was started. A certain number, perhaps 5 per cent, of the emigrants drink and go to the bad. Few do much work on their return, but spend their money, mainly upon building themselves houses and getting wives, and having spent it go off again. Most return home in the end; but some get into bad ways and cannot afford the ticket back, and a few settle abroad. A Sikh member of my staff who knows the emigrant well was more critical, and said that when he came back to his village he was usually a discontented fellow and soon got through his money. He admitted, however, that he appreciated the consolidation of holdings, deposited money with his village bank, and sometimes took to improved methods of cultivation, but he thought that emigration had a bad effect upon the mind. A fellow Sikh who had been abroad had even said to him that Guru Govind had committed a great mistake in resisting the efforts made to convert him and his followers to Muhammadanism; but for this, Sikhs might all have been Muhammadans and they would not now be divided from each other.[1]

A thrifty Community

Near Mahilpur there is a remarkable group of twenty villages belonging to Mehtons, of whom I have written elsewhere.[2] They are the thriftiest of the thrifty and remind one of the story of the frugal Sheikh who, having three people to feed—himself, his pony, and his cock—and only two pice (a halfpenny) to do it on, bought a melon, and gave the rind to the pony, the seeds to the cock, and kept the rest for himself. The melon is one of their staple products, and when ripe forms the basis of their diet, and they even cook and eat its seeds. As cultivators they are unsurpassed, but their fields are so fragmented that many of them are too small for the village map. To prevent people taking advantage of this to rob a neighbour, when the leaves of the rape have to be picked, a watchman paid by the village watches the crop to prevent any one picking till every one is ready to start. And when land has to be ploughed or a crop to be cut, all have to do it at a stated time, which is announced by beat of drum. The consolidation of holdings by co-operative societies is naturally popular, since a small holding is twice as difficult to live on when broken up into a number of fragments scattered round the village. The smallness of their holdings has forced them, with hundreds of others, into the army, but it has not prevented them amassing a good deal of capital, since they are not only good cultivators and excessively frugal but also extremely industrious. One village bank—the village contains but eighty houses—has a deposit of Rs.50,000 with the Mahilpur Union, and only four members of the bank are in debt. Another reason, and a significant one, for this comparative prosperity is that they spend very little on their marriages—generally not more than Rs.250.

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[1] Twenty or thirty years ago the Hindu emigrant on his return from overseas used to have to purify himself by drinking Ganges water and giving a feast to Brahmin, relative, and friend. This is no longer done.

[2] *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt,* 2nd ed., 1928, p. 47.

Jat Marriages

Marriage costs the Jat fully as much as the Rajput. But Jats are not without their prudence, for many go outside the district to buy themselves wives—to Hamirpur in Kangra and to the Hill States below Simla, and farther afield, to Bikaner in the west and to Benares and Gaya in the east, where, unlike the Punjab, women have no scarcity value. In this way a wife can be picked up for four or five hundred rupees as against a thousand or two if bought in the neighbourhood. One of my informants, an official, went so far as to say that 75 per cent of the Jats of the tahsil had purchased their wives from other castes, mostly from those of humbler rank. These are the baneful results of there being in the Punjab nearly two million more males than females.[1]

[7 MILES]

December 12*th*. MAHILPUR *to* GARSHANKAR *via* POSI

Consolidation of holdings

The first few miles of our march lay along the high road from Hoshiarpur to Garshankar—a good pakka[2] road and beautifully shaded. Lorries passed us every five minutes. Few now travel on foot, though I met one person walking barefoot and carrying in his hands a pair of black leather shoes. We met many children on their way to school, some with slate and books on their heads, one or two on bicycles, and others walking along in little cheerful groups. A sight I have never seen before on an Indian highway was a tall young Sikh walking beside a bullock cart reading the Granth Sahib.[3] Rarely does one see an Indian reading in a leisure moment, but apparently many Akali Sikhs carry a pocket Granth Sahib to read at odd hours. Another significant sight was a little tumble-down shed by the roadside with a Sikh working on his land close by. He had built the shed for his cattle, and one of his family slept there at night to look after them. The case illustrates the growing desire to leave the village and live on the land, but this is difficult until holdings are consolidated, for at present in this part of the world they are incredibly fragmented. This Sikh said that he had five or six fields scattered about the village, and that he would gladly have all his land in one place. Later on at Posi, where I attended a meeting of the local Banking Union, a number of owners asked that their fields might be consolidated. Many admitted the great advantage of consolidation, and several said there should be a law to enforce it, but all demurred strongly to paying anything for it. 'Where is the money to come from?' they asked. 'You spend enough on marriages,' I replied. 'No one marries now,' said one of them, 'we can't afford it.' 'Then whence all these children?' and I pointed to the swarms of ragamuffins sitting on the walls of the courtyard in which we sat, a familiar sight in every village when elders gather.

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[1] In 1928, males numbered 12,151,641, females 10,133,912.

[2] Metalled.

[3] The Sikh Bible.

Emigration

I was received at Posi by a red-coated band which played the national anthem with rather more zeal than tune. The nine bandsmen, all Muhammadans of the village, do nothing but attend local weddings, for which they are paid Rs.25 to 30 in addition to their food. At the meeting of the Union there was again talk about emigration. There was a fine old man there who had spent 26 years in Australia and had brought back Rs.56,000, the result of trading in piece-goods. He said Australia was a better country than this, as it was clean, there was no backbiting or going to law, and wages were good; but there was much drinking and many got drunk. Rs.56,000 is by no means a top figure for an emigrant to bring back with him, and at Garshankar there is a four-storied house built by a Rajput who is credited with having brought back a lakh (£7,500) from the States.

In the south of Italy the money brought back by the returned emigrant has almost killed the usurer.[1] Here the combined effect of emigration and co-operation has been greatly to diminish the power of the money-lender; and the tendency has probably been accentuated by the development of the agriculturist money-lender, who is more numerous in this district than in most.[2] The president of the Union said that many professional money-lenders had had to give up their business, and that in Posi, a village of 2,700 inhabitants, four had gone elsewhere and invested their money in trade and in purchasing land in Bikaner.

A Fruit and Vegetable Garden

At Posi I was shown a thriving six-acre fruit and vegetable garden containing orange, mango, and banana trees, and a crop of tobacco and chillies. Yet only a year ago the land was all sand. It took twenty men 23 days to clear it, and 500 cartloads of manure to provide the necessary surface. The inhabitants of Posi gave both labour and manure free to oblige the owner, who is most respected and who as president of the Union has done good service for co-operation. They worked in three-day shifts and after the custom of the country received in return their midday meal. Orange trees were obtained from Gujranwala, banana trees from the Bombay Presidency, and the gardener from the United Provinces. Now the well is being deepened, and a pukka house and shed being built to accommodate the garden staff and the cattle. The whole thing is a remarkable example of enterprise and of the spontaneous co-operation of villager with villager, which is the basis of all healthy life. More of this and the face of the Punjab might be changed. But faction, which is far too prevalent in the Punjab village, makes it difficult; and communalism may in time make it impossible.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 289.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Communalism

A highly educated landowner, who knows the peasant of the central Punjab better than any one else of my acquaintance and whom I shall call *X*, thinks that faction is increasing because there is more rivalry and greed, the one springing from the individualism of the age, and the other from the higher standard of living attained by many and desired by all. Communalism has not got hold of the village as it has of the town, but there is a danger that it will spread from the one to the other. I asked him whether he would rather live in a village with a common life transcending caste or in one in which each caste drew its life and vigour from the larger caste organization outside. Speaking as a villager, he said he would prefer the first, and it can hardly be doubted that he would be right, for in villages of five and six hundred inhabitants—the normal size in the Punjab[1]—the health of the village organism depends upon the strength of its common life. Yet modern political forces with their strong communal bias threaten to make this common life impossible. As in Una, co-operation is doing what it can to prevent this, for the different castes and communities are well mixed up in our societies, and not infrequently the shopkeeper is a member.

The Sikh Peasant's Religion

X thinks that it is a mistake to suppose that the Sikh peasant bothers much about religion. He has discussed the point with people in different villages, and all agree that beyond the observance of a few rites, mainly on special occasions, religion hardly enters into his daily life. And even these rites are more the concern of women than of men, and but for the reminder of the family priest, a reminder often prompted by self-interest rather than by love of his flock, most would pass unobserved. In a village of 278 adult Sikhs, he found that only 11 said their prayers regularly. This took them from ten to twenty minutes a day and was almost always combined with manual work, sometimes the hardest of its kind, such as ploughing, digging, and chopping up fodder. Similarly, women prayed as they turned the grindstones and churned the milk. Rarely were prayers said squatting formally on a bed or on a raised platform. Most of the 11 were over 45, and, as *X* remarked, this is an age when 'end is nearer than beginning' and preparation for the next world comes to be a serious thought. Though only 11 said the prescribed prayers regularly, another 10 knew them in part and recited them on occasions like the first of the month (*Anwás*) and the day of the full moon (*Puranmáshi*). *X* says that the village is typical of most Sikh villages in the central Punjab and contains a fair sprinkling of Akális,[1] who pay more attention to these things than most. The explanation is that the peasant is absorbed in the primary task of earning his living. In this respect he does not differ much from the business man in the West, who works hard for six days of the week and on the seventh mingles in varying proportions the observances of religion with the pursuit of pleasure and the enjoyment of repose.

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[1] The average in 1921 was 546.

The likeness is, however, more apparent than real, for, though from day to day religion occupies little of the peasant's time and attention, its effect in moulding his ambitions and ideals is considerable. Life is conceived as a preparation for the life to come, which is everlasting, and ultimately all that is desired is sufficient strength and leisure to prepare for it. For that there must, of course, be ample sustenance, but more than this is a hindrance rather than a help. All therefore that the peasant would ask for when he prays is a sufficiency of flour, pulse, salt, and ghi; good clothes for the body, and shoes for the feet; a bed with pillow, mattress, and quilt; a cow or buffalo in milk, a mare to ride, a good wife, and sons; and if to these is added freedom from debt, he will have attained the ideal conditions for the realization of Self, the summum bonum of both Sikh and Hindu. Less than this will not give his mind that fullness of peace which complete devotion to religion demands; and more may lead him away from the path of self-fulfilment. In saying this *X* was epitomizing two hymns from the Granth Sahib. The first is a prayer of the weaver saint, Kabir, and in rough translation runs thus:

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[1] An Akali, which means literally a believer in the Immortal (*Akál*), is a Sikh who regards Sikhism as a 'church militant'.

A hungry man cannot perform Thy service,
Take back this rosary of Thine.

I only ask for the dust of the Saint's feet.
Let me not be in debt.

I beg for two seers of flour,
A quarter of a seer of butter and salt.

I beg for half a seer of pulse (*dal*),
Which will feed me twice a day.

I beg for a bed with four legs to it,
A pillow and a mattress.

I beg for a quilt over me,
And then Thy slave will devotedly worship Thee.

I have never been covetous,
I only love Thy name.[1]

The second hymn, which is attributed to a Jat saint called Dhanna, mentions the remaining things, including 'grain of seven ploughings'.[2]

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[1] Bhukhe bhagat na kije,
Yeh mala apni lije.

Hau mangun santan rena,
Main nahin kisi ka dena.

Do sar mangun chuna,
Pao ghiyo sang luna.

Adh sar mangun dale,
Moko donon wakat jawale.

Khat mangun chaupai,
Sarhana aur tulai.

Upar ko mangun khinda,
Teri bhagat kare jan binda.

Main nahin kita labho,
Ik nam tera main phabo.

[2] Anaj mangun sat sika.

The hymns recall a remark made by an old peasant when the fortune brought back by a returned emigrant from Australia was being discussed over the huqqa. 'God', he said, 'gives me two meals a day in my own village and amongst my own children. That man can also eat this much, and I do not want any more.' Probably the majority of those who live in the 34,000 villages of the Punjab would say the same. But the times are changing, and a more acquisitive spirit is in the air, roused by the sight of the wealth that 6,000 miles of railway and 20,000 miles of canals have brought to the province; and it may be doubted whether ten or twenty years hence the teaching of the hymns will find general acceptance. Yet if a few things were added to their simple catalogue of needs—for example, a more varied diet, clean surroundings, health, and a modicum of real education for both man and woman—and also a stanza that the satisfaction of material needs depends as much upon man's effort as upon God's will, the peasant would have a philosophy of life which would at least be better than that of the business cormorant, whose appetite for wealth is insatiable.

Fatalism

At present, underlying all religious conceptions in the village is the instinctive belief that everything is 'as God wills'. It is true that Muhammad bade his followers first fasten their camels with a rope and then trust in God,[1] and that the Koran contains the remark that 'there is nothing for a man save his own exertions'; but the popular attitude is better expressed by the saying: 'If the kair tree puts forth no leaves in the spring, is it the fault of the spring? If the owl cannot see in the day, is it the fault of the sun?' In touching upon this elsewhere I noted that in the canal colonies, which are materially the most advanced part of the province, fatalism was no longer quite the fetish it used to be.[1] According to *X* the same may be said of the central Punjab, and a member of my staff, endorsing this, said that he found the peasant readier than before to accept the argument that a man's fortune depended more upon effort (*tadbir*) than upon fate (*taqdir*). Not long ago he was present at a discussion on the subject in his village. His uncle observed that all was the will of God. This was challenged by a younger member of the family. 'Look', said he, 'at the difference made by sinking a well and using good seed.' 'But look at the hail,' retorted the uncle; 'it destroys good and bad alike.' Once *X* heard a spirited tenant say to his landlord, whom he was pressing to make a boring in an old well, 'A well is nearer to man than the clouds.' The clouds, says *X*, continue to inspire the farmer, but he is beginning to look with more attention and confidence to the volume of water in his well and to the means of raising it. His attitude towards manure is also changing, and he has been heard to describe it as 'a second God' (*ruri duja Rab*). The other day, meeting a white-bearded Sikh carrying a basketful on his head to his field, *X* inquired, 'Have you no sons to do this sort of work?' 'A son', replied the Sikh, 'takes sixteen years to mature and bear fruit, but manure gives grain in six months.'

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[1] The Prophet asked one who had come to see him on a camel in whose care he had left it. 'In God's care,' said the man. The Prophet bade him first bind the camel by the leg, then leave it in God's care.

Birth Control

In respect of one thing—procreation—fatalism is still dominant; but here again there are signs of change. The Islamic view, deriving from the Koran, is that not a soul is created for whom God does not provide sustenance (*risq*); and the Hindu view, shared by the Sikh, is equally fatalistic. A Sikh who at the age of 55 was still having children justified himself by saying that 'sons are supports and brothers arms'. But what will they eat? asked *X*. 'Everybody comes with a share written on his forehead,' was the reply. This is the orthodox view and the one generally held. A more modern view was put by another Sikh in the same village. Thirty years old and the owner of 17 acres—

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

a substantial holding in the central Punjab—he had been married eleven years and within the first six years had had two sons and two daughters, and thereafter neither son nor daughter. This, he said, was due to 'self-restraint and method', and to 'sleeping out by the well on certain days of the month'. 'More sons', he explained, 'will have no land to cultivate, and I do not wish to make beggars of them all.' He then quoted the proverb: 'Too much rain reduces the crop: too many sons bring reproach.' The first Sikh might have countered with the better-known proverb: 'A Jat never has enough sons, milk, or rain.' The two proverbs represent the old order and the new, and the new is encroaching upon the old more than might be expected. A Sub-Assistant Surgeon in charge of a rural dispensary in Hoshiarpur told *X* that he had had many references from villagers on the subject, and that he had been called in to attend a number of complicated cases arising out of misdirected attempts at control. In a Sikh village in Gurdaspur *X* found that a midwife, who was well known for her skill in midwifery, had rendered 150 women incapable of bearing any more children. She had done this by the application of a medicine taught her by her mother. The women were nearly all wives of landowners, and none had been treated without the consent of her husband and unless she had at least three sons. The midwife had started doing this twelve or thirteen years ago, but 50 of the 150 cases had been done in the last year. Her minimum fee was 10 rupees. *X*'s further inquiries suggest that she is not the only midwife who does this. As he remarked, 'a new current has set in and is on the swell'; and in a district like Hoshiarpur, where the average holding is not more than 5 acres, one can understand that to any one but an out and out fatalist the appearance of a fourth or fifth child with a share written on its forehead is not likely to be specially welcome.

The prohibition of widow re-marriage amongst *Marriage*

Hindus is a partial check upon the birth-rate, though not a very human one. In four villages near his own *X* found there were fifty widows between the ages of sixteen and forty. Another slight check is the custom prevalent in many Hindu families, of the men all sleeping together. Polyandry, too, is a check amongst the Sikhs. This practice is a consequence of the great dearth of women, to which I have already alluded[1] and from which the Sikhs suffer acutely. *X* thinks it is growing, and quoted the case of eleven brothers living in one of these villages who had only five wives between them. The almost universal habit of early marriage operates, of course, in the contrary direction. The evils of this have begun to be realized, and child marriage is becoming less common. Yet a bridegroom of twelve years old is by no means a rare sight, and even the most advanced still think it obligatory to marry a daughter as soon as she reaches the age of puberty. The arrival of puberty is regarded as nature's signal, and to postpone marriage beyond it brings a slur upon the family. *X* says that in the opinion of most an unmarried daughter of sixteen 'indicates some defect in the brain of the parents or their financial position'; and some Hindus go so far as to say that if the face of an unmarried girl who has reached the age of puberty is seen by her parents or brothers, they are liable to divine punishment. The punishment particularly feared, one may suppose, is the possible effect of a warm climate upon the blood; and the fear is analogous to that which inspired the remarks about the Spanish princesses of a hundred years ago—'si nous ne hâtions pas, l'héritier viendrait avant le mari.'[2] However this may be, in two villages containing about 280 households *X* found there were only three or four girls of eighteen to twenty-two unmarried, and these were unmarried only because they were for sale and had been withheld in expectation of a higher figure than had yet been offered.

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[1] p. 31.

[2] Quoted by Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, ch. v.

Purchase of brides

The purchase of brides has already been mentioned more than once.[1] *X* says the practice is increasing and has penetrated all grades of society from Brahmin to sweeper—a Sodhi Sikh recently sold his daughter for Rs.3,000—and he estimates that in the central Punjab it enters into 70 per cent of the marriages made. I have given details of the prices paid elsewhere,[2] and my information on this tour shows they were in no way exaggerated. But it is not so much the amount paid that matters as the shameful fact that women are bought and sold. This is clearly not compatible with civilized life, and that it should be increasing *pari passu* with so-called modern progress suggests a doubt whether there has been any progress at all. If only people felt as strongly as Mr. Gandhi on the subject, it would soon cease. 'If I had a young girl under my charge,' he said, addressing students in Sind, where the evil is also rife, 'I would rather keep her a maiden all my life than give her away to one who expected a single pice[3] for taking her for his wife.'[4]

The Countryside

On our way from Posi to Garshankar villages followed each other as quickly as stations on a suburban line, and they all had co-operative banks and pukka houses. Even the Chamars had built themselves a settlement of half-pukka houses outside one of them. The Inspector with me, echoing what was said in Una, observed that nowadays every one wanted a well-ventilated (*hawadar*) house, and *X* said the same. The peasants were hard at work ploughing or rolling in the newly-sown wheat seed; but busy as they were, many came hurrying forward, some even leaving their ploughs, to have a look at what is no longer the common sight it was—a sahib on a horse—and to have a word or two with us as we passed. I asked a Sikh Jat who was ridging his fields with a rake why the boy who was helping him was not at school. 'I want him for the work,' he said, 'but the other is at school.' Where the standard of living is near the margin of subsistence, work must come first and education second, or there will not be enough to eat. The sugar-cane with its embattled squares of tall arching stems gives a pleasant character to the countryside, which would otherwise be monotonously flat. But, except the Coimbatore cane, most of it was of poor quality, and in one village the people said they would have to feed much of it to their cattle, for fodder was scarce.

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[1] pp. 4 and 7.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 52–5.

[3] About a farthing.

[4] *Young India.*

[14 MILES]

December 13*th*. GARSHANKAR *to* BALACHAUR

Hindu and Muhammadan Relations

As there were heavy arrears of work, to save time I motored the first six miles. Seen from a car instead of a horse, a road loses all human interest. There can be no casual loiterings or wayside excursions, nor any hailing of passers-by to inquire of their doings. We did, however, stop at Samundra, because people came forward to greet us. They were the members of the village bank, and mostly Hindu and Muhammadan Rajputs. Hindu and Muhammadan were of common stock, and the difference in religion was due to part of the village having turned Muhammadan 'fourteen generations ago'. They still maintain the friendliest relations, and the Hindus invite the local mullah to their weddings and give him a brass vessel (*lota*) for his ablutions, while the Muhammadans invite the prohit or family priest and give him a present too. This interchange of presents, says *X*, is much less common than it used to be; but it is still practised in the less sophisticated areas (for instance, Shakargarh), and it is still the general practice for Hindu and Muhammadan to invite mullah and prohit to their weddings.

Wells

Half the wells in this village had run dry, and deeper ones were being gallantly sunk in their place. The distance of the water from the surface being about 30 feet, a well costs Rs.500 to 600 if the cultivator provides his own labour, but this does not include the apparatus of the charsa[1] or Persian wheel. There was loud complaint that their lands were insufficient. The president of the bank admitted that he was well off on his twelve acres, but he had two children and six acres apiece would not be enough for them. He had therefore tried to buy land in Bikaner, but the effort had failed. 'If only', he exclaimed, 'we were allowed to go to "Amrika" and Australia!'

The Zemindar Matriculate

The spokesman of the members who pressed round the car was a grey-bearded Muhammadan Rajput, without education but with a natural intelligence and gift of expression that set one wondering why it is so difficult to impart these most desirable qualities in a school. All the members were emphatic that the education of the matriculate unfitted him for the life of a cultivator. He can't work in the sun, said one. He can't do anything that requires vigour (*zor*), said another. His legs won't support him, said a third. Argument after argument were pattered out against him. A Sub-Inspector with me said there were any number of peasant matriculates in his circle, but only about 10 per cent were cultivating their fields and most of the rest did nothing. Another Sub-Inspector said that about one-third of the 20 to 25 matriculates living in his circle were cultivating. Both agreed that those who do nothing spend their time in playing cards and loafing about the neighbourhood. There is a very large number of matriculates in the tahsil. One village of 2,200 inhabitants has 35 as well as 4 graduates. All these have found employment, but elsewhere many have been driven back to their fields by sheer necessity. Unhappily, they cannot go in for improved methods, for the drying-up of the wells has made water scarce, and without plenty of water intensive cultivation is impossible. For this very reason, said the members of the Samundra bank, it was difficult for them to grow vegetables. A vegetable-seller who had a shop by the side of the road where we were talking managed, however, to do it. He had taken a few kanals[1] to grow them and sold them both at his shop and in the villages round. *X*, who was with me, contrasted this with the Amritsar district where water was plentiful. There the Sikh Jat is beginning to grow vegetables for himself, and recently *X* came across a village where some Sikhs have made an arrangement with a lorry driver to take their produce—potatoes, cauliflowers, radishes, &c.—every day into Amritsar (17 miles away) and hand them over to a vegetable-seller, who keeps an account of the sales.

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[1] A leather bucket with a rope.

At the next village, where we found our ponies, we were met by the president of another bank. He was an unusual type, having passed the First Arts examination. He had left the Forman Christian College four years ago, and had been fortunate in finding a certain number of more or less educated men in his village—a retired sub-assistant surgeon and so forth—in consequence of which he had not found village life irksome. He agreed that education up to the entrance standard made it impossible for a fellow to work as hard in the fields as an ordinary cultivator, since he could not stand the heat in May and June; but he said he could work for seven or eight hours a day and give useful assistance, and being educated was likely to be more progressive. All standing round agreed that a boy would not be spoilt for cultivation if he were educated up to 'the lower middle' (*six classes*) and no further: less than this was not practical, for a boy who did not go beyond the primary soon forgot to read and write.

Religious Teaching

Once on our ponies we were able to stop and talk to those we met on the way. We found a Hindu Jat laying out a small garden with mango trees and preparing to sink a well. He was also building a small house where he proposed to live by himself, for he was childless. *X* says that in the central Punjab there are many now who wish to live on their land, mainly because it saves so much trouble—fodder and manure, for instance, had not to be carted to and from the village—but partly too because they desire a well-ventilated dwelling. On our way we were joined by a zaildar[1] with a red beard and a huge front tooth. There were eight or nine mosques in his zail, but only three or four mullahs had read even up to the third or fourth primary. Did they teach? 'They take the name of God', he replied, 'in order that they may fill their bellies with bread. "Say your prayers and give to the poor" is all the teaching they know.' But this summer there came to the neighbourhood a maulvi,[2] from where the zaildar did not know, and he stayed two months preaching amongst the people telling them to work hard, take no interest, and spend little on their marriages. He was a good man, and the people listened to him. With the Hindus it is much the same. They meet together occasionally, generally in the slack season of the cold weather, to hear the scriptures read or to listen to hymns (*rág*), which are sung in the vernacular to the accompaniment of a harmonium. These hymns are more popular than the scriptures which are difficult to follow. But whichever it is, the reading or the singing goes on evening after evening for a fixed period, which varies from ten to forty days, and on the last day a collection is made for the Brahmin reader or singer. People give from an anna to a rupee. Of individual teaching there is almost none, and individual worship, says an educated Rajput, merely consists of tinkling a bell and doing puja. In his village, though most go to the temple on festivals, not more than half go there regularly, and most of them go only when there is not much to be done in the fields. This Rajput owns about 70 acres and gives the temple priest five or six maunds of grain at each harvest and a rupee at each of the twelve or thirteen holy-days. Most people give a maund or two and four annas on each holy-day, or about one rupee an acre every year. Some of these priests do almost nothing in return, for the president of a village bank told me yesterday that the family priest of his village came there only to get his harvest dues and to perform an occasional marriage.

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[1] In this district nine kanals make an acre.

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[1] The headman of a group of villages, generally twenty or thirty. The word recurs frequently.

[2] One learned in the Muhammadan scriptures.

Carting As the sun was setting and filling the cloud-flecked sky with colour, we met a procession of bullock carts on their way to Ludhiana with charcoal—twenty maunds in each cart. The carters, who were Jats, had been forced to take to this work, because most of their land had been washed away by the Sutlej, which we are approaching. For the seven days of the road—four out and three back—they were to get only ten rupees per cart, which, however, would leave them four rupees in hand after paying the feed of their bullocks. In this tract the land is tolerably fertile and the rainfall good; but man has multiplied to such an extent that life is a continual struggle, and when the river takes sides against him, he is hard put to it to survive. Yet some have done well enough, as the large number of pukka houses testifies. There is not a village without them (all as ugly as sin), but most have been built with the fruits of employment outside the district. An exceptional case was that of a shoemaker who has made a fortune out of native slippers.

At Balachaur I found outside the rest house a fine old pipal tree, and inside, a copy of the Bible and a first edition of *The Princess Casamassima* by Henry James.

[16 MILES]

December 14*th*. BALACHAUR *to* RUPAR

Wayfarers The road to-day to the Sutlej was all sand, sometimes lighter, sometimes heavier, but always sand. We passed two fruit gardens, one just laid down and the other firmly established in spite of the sand. The pukka houses continued, but only one or two in each village.

They were in striking contrast to the tumbledown dwellings which are the lot of most. A village of Hindu Jats and Gujars on the edge of the Sutlej riverain presented a woeful spectacle of semi-ruin—the houses looked as if they had not been re-plastered for years—yet in the middle of it, where in old days would have been the mansion of the money-lender, rose a fine two-storied house built by a carpenter who had spent twenty-six years in East Africa. Towering above the village, it proclaimed the inequalities of modern wealth. A little farther we met a tanner who had become a sadhu on his way with clappers (*chimti*) and pail to beg his sustenance from the neighbourhood. He carried the clappers, which were two feet long, to announce his coming to the village, and the pail to receive the offerings of the devout. He lives in a small shrine (*kutia*), and the only service he renders is to feed the passing traveller who desires a night's food and shelter. We next met a cultivator carrying an ordinary wine-bottle half full of attar of roses, which he had got from a compounder of medicines who lived in a village some miles away. His son was suffering from abdominal pains which returned every fifteen or twenty days, and this would reduce them. Our last encounter before coming to the Sutlej was with three peasants returning home from Rupar, where they had been to press a suit for the possession of 5 acres. The case had first been heard in Ambala, and there they had had to pay a lawyer Rs.50. At Rupar they had got one for Rs.35. They had already spent Rs.125, and issues had only just been struck. They would now have to produce their evidence. As they lived 15 miles from Rupar, every hearing meant at least two days away from their fields. A case in many ways typical of the 250,000 suits instituted every year in the Punjab.[1]

The Problem of the Manure Heap

On the way we spent an hour in the village of Gahon, which is inhabited by Muhammadan Rajputs and Hindu Jats. We were received by the headman, a Muhammadan Rajput, old, white-bearded, and burly, and of such dignity and character that, as he leant upon the staff which he clasped under his chin, he seemed the very personification of the wisdom and governance which have held the Indian village together through the centuries. Noticing the usual manure heaps as we entered the villlage, I asked the people why they did not pit their manure. They replied that the Deputy Commissioner had recently been round, and that to please him they had dug all their manure into the ground and covered it with earth, but after he had gone the old heaps had somehow reappeared. A zaildar near Mahilpur told me much the same. When the Deputy Commissioner visited his zail every village was clean, but it was not so now. It is not easy, he said, to get every one to store their refuse at a distance from the village and to keep it in pits, for what are the village menials to do who have cows but no land? Other people do not like them using their land for fear that some day they should establish a claim to it. And even for those who have land it may mean carrying the refuse farther than is convenient every day. When I asked the zaildar why there was so much more interest in these things than before, he replied: 'Where the ruler (*hákim*) leads, the people follow; and where "officers" look, the people also look.' The educated, he added, were easier to convince in these things than the uneducated.

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[1] For the three years ending 1927 the average was 244,727 p. a. (See second footnote on page 113.)

Houses

Most of the houses I entered had a dilapidated look outside, but inside they were clean and well swept. Only the poorer share their dwellings with their cattle; the rest have a separate abode (*haweli*) for them. But both man and beast spend the night in windowless dungeons. In one an effort had been made to let in a little light and air by knocking out some brick and plaster just under the roof, but not more had been knocked out than would let in a hand. The straw litter for the cattle is left there for three or four days and then put aside for manure. The chief fuel used is wood, of which there is plenty about, but dung-cakes are used to heat the milk and make the cream rise. In the evening this is mixed with curds, and the next morning the whole is churned into butter by the woman of the house. With the help of a stout piece of cord, which is wound round the churn, she turns it rapidly to and fro, and if she wants extra purchase, she rests her foot against the vessel containing the cream. The buttermilk (*lassi* or *chhá*) is put aside to be drunk at the morning meal—(*chháwela*)—'buttermilk time'—and the butter that is not consumed is boiled and turned into ghi.

There are some comparatively new houses in the village. One of these, a small affair of two stories, had been built by a Rajput who owns 15 acres and has a brother in the army. One room had a mantelpiece—a most unfamiliar sight in a village house—on which reposed a large family of brass tumblers, all called 'glass'; and in the kitchen was a regular chimney with, however, an earthen *chula* or open oven in the fireplace. The lady of the house liked the chimney as the smoke did not get into her eyes when she cooked and the room did not get black. There is one more chimney in the village, and quite a number, it is said, in the tahsil. I inquired whether the kachha[1] or the pukka house was preferred. All were in favour of the pukka: no annual repairs were needed, and though a bit hotter in summer and colder in winter, it did not leak in the rains; and when, as in this case, the inside walls were plastered, it was no hotter than a kachha house. The house had cost Rs.1,500 and was built partly with ready money and partly by borrowing Rs.500 at the usual 18¾ per cent. The inner rooms were as dark as those of older houses, but the outer room had two little skylights just under the roof. Upstairs was a room for sleeping in the hot weather, and outside, one of the walls was gaily decorated with a picture of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikhs. The beds were ordinary string charpoys, and amongst the many domestic utensils were grindstones. In the courtyard the day's milk was simmering on a fire of dung-cakes in an earthenware vessel (*baroli*) which was so black and shining that it looked as if it had just been dipped in tar. The two members of my staff with me said the cultivator was keener to improve his house than his clothing or his food. The last two were now reasonably sufficient, but his house left much to be desired. All wanted a pukka house, partly for show, partly for comfort, and partly for health.

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[1] The kachha house is usually made of sun-dried bricks or of large clods of caked mud taken from the bottom of a pond. The pukka house is made of burnt bricks or stone.

Rajputs and Vegetables

Another thing that all desire is vegetables, and so great is the demand that even Rajputs are beginning to give up their prejudice against their cultivation. In this village, for the last year or two, they have been growing the simpler vegetables—brinjáls, gourds (*ghia*), and sweet potatoes—and in a village close by they have begun to grow cauliflowers for sale in Balachaur. Much the same is true of other villages in the tahsil, and my Inspector tells me that this year near Rupar he found a Rajput squatting by the roadside in a little grass shelter under his one and only mango tree to guard the fruit which he sold to passers-by. His neighbours said tauntingly that he was no Rajput, but he remained unmoved. In Rajput eyes, if it is derogatory to grow vegetables, it is sheer disgrace to sell anything retail; and it is largely because vegetables are commonly sold retail that the prejudice against their growth has arisen.

Women's Work

In Gahon most women still grind, but this is not characteristic of the tahsil, for nearly everywhere there are mills driven by oil engines or bullocks. This is a great boon to those with child, and even poor prefer to pay for their grinding rather than do it themselves. *X* thinks that women are usually the better for not having to grind, since it imposes a heavy strain and they have enough to do with spinning, cooking, and washing, and with feeding and dressing their children. Woman works hardest in the south, and in Rohtak the wife of a Jat does all that a man does except plough and sow. She keeps splendidly fit, but necessarily neglects her children. The women of the Arains, who are the great market-gardeners of the Punjab, work almost as hard. They carry in the fodder for the cattle, spread the manure on the fields, help with the reaping, and even drive the bullocks at the well. Like the wives of the market-gardeners round Naples, they take their unweaned children to the fields and nurse them in the intervals of their work. And in addition to everything else, many sell the vegetables that their husbands grow. These women are nicknamed 'khari-chak' or carriers of the basket (*khari*), for poising a basket of vegetables on their heads they go to town or village and hawk them from shop to shop or door to door. It is a much debated question amongst Arains whether this should be allowed. Many think that their women are safest at home and those who are jealous of their izzat forbid it. But the women, who no doubt enjoy going to the bazaar, claim that they get better prices for the vegetables than the men, because it is often the women who buy, and a woman bargains with a woman better than a man.

Spinning

If the wife of the Arain and the Rohtak Jat works too hard, the pardah-nishin Rajput probably does too little, unless she grinds or is an ardent spinner. But spinning, alas, begins to go out of fashion. The mill-made clothes are procured so easily and are of such seductive variety. Nor is spinning as paying as it used to be. A woman told a Rajput member of my staff that if she and her two daughters worked ten hours a day for 24 days, they could make a profit of only 3 rupees on cotton worth Rs.18. To this profit must, however, be added the greater durability of homespun cloth.

Jat Housewife The golden mean for woman's work is represented by the Jat housewife of the central Punjab, who does not have to grind. She gets up between five and six, and after churning the milk which has been set overnight and making the butter or ghi, milks the cattle and cleans out house, kitchen, and yard. If there is a sweeper, she gathers the rubbish into a pile, which he clears away when he comes on his rounds: otherwise, she clears it away herself. Children have then to be wakened, clothed, and fed; water fetched, and her husband's meal taken to the fields. On returning, she spins or, if it is the cold weather, gins cotton till it is time to prepare the midday meal. This takes about an hour, though it usually consists only of girdle cakes of unleavened bread and spiced pulse (*dál*). While the pulse simmers on the fire, she spins. In the afternoon, dung-cakes are made and put out to dry in the sun, the fodder is chopped for the cattle, and rape leaves (*sarson*[1]) are picked to provide the greens (*ság*) for the evening meal. In the better-to-do households, under the influence of Rajput custom, little field-work is done beyond the picking of cotton. More spinning and perhaps a little embroidery are done instead. At sundown the cattle come home in a cloud of dust, which shimmers gold in the evening light, and buffalo and cow have to be milked and possibly watered. The preparation of the evening meal takes another hour, and after all have been fed and the children put to bed, the housewife goes to bed herself, and it is then nearer ten than nine. A sufficient day's work even for one born of Jats. When grinding has to be done as well, the day becomes too heavy and the night too short, for the grindstones must be at work by five if the day's flour is to be ready in time.

Pardah As in Una, the pros and cons of pardah are beginning to be debated. A Bhanot Rajput who was riding with me a day or two ago thought it would be better both for cultivation and for health if, instead of being confined all day, the Rajput women did some work in the fields. Some of them, he said, would like to come out of pardah, a fact that another Bhanot Rajput, an influential co-operator, confirmed. The latter asserted that, as soon as the older generation had gone, they would come out and be the better for it too. He was even in favour of girls' schools and co-operative societies for women. Pardah is not quite as strict here as in Una. A Rajput lady can visit a neighbour in the same village without wearing a veil; she need not conceal herself from the village menials when they enter the house for the performance of their tasks, and at a marriage or a funeral she gathers in public with the other ladies of the village.

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[1] *Brassica var. glauca.*

Indigenous Co-operation

A few minor points may be noted before we leave the tahsil. Small as the holdings are and difficult as it is to make both ends meet, there are no home industries, and the cultivator's only supplementary resource at home is cartage, of which we had an illustration yesterday. Many Rajputs, however, keep a few poultry for domestic use. A certain amount of indigenous co-operation survives, though less than in Una. A common watchman is often employed for about a month round harvest-time to protect the ripening crops from straying cattle and thievish hands. Wells, too, are sunk co-operatively. In the old days fifteen or twenty cultivators would join together for this purpose, but now rarely more than three or four do so, because people do not combine so readily. Wells sunk in this way are run either by each shareholder contributing a bullock to turn the wheel or draw the charsa, or by each taking it in turn to irrigate his fields. The desire for wells and the reluctance to combine has led to the exchange of many small plots of land by mutual arrangement and to the partial consolidation of holdings.

The ease with which we forded the Sutlej was an insult to a river which is the greatest of the five rivers of the Punjab and was once the frontier of our Empire. The Sirhind Canal has reduced it to two narrow streams hardly knee deep. The hills which conceal Simla from the plains are now in full view, while the great rampart of the Daulah Dhar, just visible yesterday, has disappeared from sight.

[15 MILES]

III. AMBALA

Rajputs and Better Living

PART I—THE KHARAR TAHSIL

December 16*th*. RUPAR *to* KHARAR

The Kharar Tahsil

Yesterday was my first day's halt, and luckily my first day's rain. To-day I woke to find the world bathed in freshness and beauty, and the snows radiantly clear. At Rupar we entered Ambala, the district which separates the Punjab of the five rivers from the Hindustan of the Jamna and the Ganges. In the Kharar tahsil the character of the Punjab and its people is still dominant, but there are already signs of change in the vegetation; for example, in the long avenues of neem trees[1] and in the more frequent mango groves. These last, with their long low aisles and crypt-like gloom, were in marked contrast to the brilliant day. There is no complaint of shortage of land, perhaps because in the decade 1901–11 the population declined by 20 per cent. There are only 562 to the cultivated square mile as against 828 in Garshankar, and though the rainfall is only 30 inches, few have troubled to sink wells, presumably because the simple standard of living can be well enough supported without.[2] A certain number emigrate, but far fewer than in Garshankar, and in the last twelve months only 119 have applied for passports.[3] Half the tahsil is cultivated by Hindu Jats who are 'thrifty and industrious', and a considerable area by Rajputs who are much less so. A great stand-by is the sale of milk and ghi, which brings in nearly three lakhs a year.[2]

Guinea-fowls, Occupation, and Caste

A novel sight on the road was a flock of forty or fifty guinea-fowl being driven along by a sweeper and a Seyyed, doubtless, like all Seyyeds, claiming descent from the Prophet. The Seyyed had bought them for twelve annas each and was on his way to the nearest station, some miles on, to entrain them for Delhi, where he expected to get two rupees apiece for them. In the summer he traffics with Simla. The keeping of guinea-fowls is still regarded by the ordinary peasant proprietor as thoroughly compromising (*hattak*), because sweepers rear them; but they are eaten with relish by all who can afford them. In this case, the *soi-disant* descendant of the Prophet was working as hard as his humble companion to keep the wayward flock moving in the right direction. He is characteristic of an age in which economic pressure is forcing members of the higher castes to pocket their pride and earn their living in ways once thought derogatory. Brahmins can now be found plying carts for hire, working as tailors, dak-runners,[1] and cooks, and even serving as coolies at a station. Khatris may be seen cutting grass and selling fuel in the bazaar; Bedis[2] snaring birds and catching fish; and, as we have seen,[3] Rajputs are taking to growing vegetables. Similarly, round here during the last three or four years Muhammadans and Sikhs have begun to keep poultry for domestic use, employing a sweeper to look after them. It is clear that, so far as caste is based upon occupation, its force is less strong than it was.

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[1] *Melia indica.*

[2] *Kharar A. R.*, 1918.

[3] Information obtained from the tahsil.

Tea and Snuff

Two further changes may be noted: tea-drinking and the taking of snuff. Tea-drinking is confined to Hindus and Sikhs, many of whom took to it while serving during the war. A handful of tea is thrown into a pot containing two quarts of water and a pound of gur, and the brew is drunk by the whole family in the early morning. A Sikh with me said he brewed double this quantity every day and drank it at intervals all day, adding as much milk as he could spare. The taking of snuff is more recent and, curiously,[4] is very popular with the Sikhs, a fact that an educated Sikh confirmed.

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[1] In the hills the mails (*dák*) are generally carried by hand.

[2] 'A section of the Khatri caste to which Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, belonged' (Rose, *op. cit.*, ii. 79).

[3] pp. 23 and 50.

[4] The Sikh religion forbids the taking of tobacco in any form.

A Wayside Priest

We found a little withered old man sitting by the road selling cigarettes and sweetmeats. He proved to be the prohit or priest of a number of families round, and eked out the eight pounds of grain each gave him at harvest by this modest trade. He explained, however, that he only did this by the way and that his main office was to give the thirsty passer-by, without charge, a draught of fresh water from the well across the road. Though a family priest, he could neither read nor write, and was, indeed, only a priest by birth.

Progressive Rajputs

On the way I was joined by a retired military officer, a Rajput and the president of a village bank. The son of a Subedar-Major Bahadur, he has enlisted his boy as a Lance-Naik, though he himself started with a commission. That he has character is also evident from the fact that he farms and even ploughs his thirty acres. His Rajput neighbours look down upon him for this. Why, they ask, should a man with a pension of Rs.200 a month spend the whole day behind his cattle? In 1787 Arthur Young came upon much the same kind of thing in the south of France—poor nobles scorned for ploughing their own lands; and his comment is pat to the present case: 'These may possibly be much more estimable members of society than the fools and knaves that laugh at them.'[1] At Kharar I found another Rajput growing vegetables with the help of a Gujar or two. I saw his fields this evening and found a good crop of potatoes, carrots, turnips, and chillies, and a small garden of guavas. He, too, is the president of a bank, and is an example of the way co-operation brings good men to the fore.

We are now abreast of Kasauli (6,000 feet), and the Chor is in full view.

[17 MILES]

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[1] Arthur Young, *Travels in France, 1787–9*, edited by C. Maxwell, 1929, p. 57.

December 17*th.* KHARAR *to* MANAOLI

'Early to Wed'

As I was breakfasting in the sun, a lorry passed with almost as many passengers outside as in: two were on the bonnet, one on the step, another at the side, and a fifth on top with the luggage. After breakfast I visited the local Mission High School and was shown two remarkable cases of early marriage. The first was a goldsmith's boy in the sixth class. He was said to be 13 but did not look a day older than 10. He has started living with his wife, who is a year younger. I was told that it was his mother who insisted upon this. The second case was a boy of 16, a Sikh Jat, who was married at 13 and had already lost both wife and daughter. 'Too soon marr'd are those so early (mothers) made.'[1] I was also told of a Brahmin boy in the sixth class who, though only 14, has already had a daughter: his wife was eleven years old when she began living with him. A Brahmin, who was present, corroborated this. The ordinary age of marriage in these parts is put at 13 to 14 for a girl and 15 to 16 for a boy. By marriage is meant what the boys themselves call their 'second marriage'. I was told that a school in Hoshiarpur has made it a rule not to keep any boy after he is married in the hope that this will discourage early marriage. The need for some measure of this kind is evident from the fact that in India by the age of fifteen two out of every five girls are married, and that in 1921 nearly 400,000 of them were widows.[2]

Women's Work

On leaving Kharar, I was accompanied by an intelligent Sikh, the owner of about 500 acres. A request that a co-operative thrift society for women might be opened in his village led to talk about women and their work. No one, he said, grinds now, and few but Rajputs spin, since mill-made clothes can be purchased more cheaply—a surprising thing, for this is a cotton tract. The Sirdar did not deplore this, because it gives women more time for other things. They now weave the cotton webbing for their beds, and make cotton and woollen socks, girdles of cotton or silk for their pyjama trousers, and handkerchiefs; most of which is due to the wife of a missionary who used to visit the village. Out of doors, all that the wife of a Sikh Jat does is to take her husband his morning meal in the fields, pick the cotton, bring in and chop up the fodder, and make the dung-cakes. The latter are less used than before and need not, he thought, be used at all, for the milk could be kept warm with a wood fire.[1] Incidentally he mentioned a fact that I had already heard in Hoshiarpur, that many women now wear their jewellery only on days of festival or tamasha, because they find it hampers them in their work. Soon, he thought, they would give it up altogether. When later on I asked a gathering of villagers why women no longer wore their jewellery every day, a voice from the crowd exclaimed—*Alla ki hikmat*, it is the working of God; and another—*hukm agya*, the order has come (presumably from above). The remarks are good instances of the kismet attitude towards life.

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[1] *Romeo and Juliet*, I. ii. 13.

[2] *Census of India*, 1921, vol. i, pt. i, p. 154.

Standard of Living

The Sirdar thought that the cultivator's food had greatly improved in variety of late, for now he has both eggs and vegetables. He himself gets vegetables from Kharar, and they are often brought out to the villages to be sold. A new departure was the growing of cauliflowers by the Sainis of Kharar.[2] Owing to both land and rain being plentiful, there are very few wells, and most of these can be used for only a few hours a day, because as water is drawn, the water-level rapidly sinks. The people, therefore, have only three or four months' work a year and fill up their time with litigation, which is the curse of the tract. He agreed that if wells were sunk, even though they did not give much water, most people, with the help of the ample rainfall, would be able to grow their own vegetables. In most of the villages we passed through there was a pukka house or two, but the Sirdar said we should not find one belonging to a cultivator where the cultivators were Rajputs. There were enough in the Sikh villages, and in his own several had chimneys, which meant much better heating in the cold weather. His village even had a library, which he had stocked with 200 books, and half the village had been paved at a cost of Rs.300. He is, in fact, a good example of the new order, except in one respect—he is a money-lender on a large scale.

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[1] Cf. p. 50.

[2] The Sainis are a market-gardening caste and are important in the Kharar tahsil.

Two Better Living Societies

I stopped at Siwára to see the Better Living societies of two Muhammadan Rajput villages. Thanks to these societies, a marriage which used to cost an average person Rs.800 to 1,000 can now be done for Rs.200. A member had recently married two daughters together for this sum. Other ceremonies have been scaled down accordingly, and members who do not observe the rules are fined. One had had to pay Rs.100 for selling a daughter. The need for societies of this kind is sufficiently great. A Seyyed told me at Rupar that the funeral ceremonies of a Seyyed involved five separate feasts—on the third, ninth, nineteenth, thirtieth, and fortieth days after death, and thereafter once a year. Each occasion cost at least fifteen or twenty rupees, and as much as Rs.300 might be spent on all five, for not only had fellow Seyyeds to be feasted but also the village menials. The Better Living society does not confine itself to reducing expenditure on social ceremonial. A year ago when plague was raging in the neighbourhood and rats began to die in Siwara, the society got every one to evacuate the village and be inoculated. Every one escaped, though in a village close by where this was not done fifty people are said to have died. The president of the society had his womenfolk inoculated as well. The mullah protested, declaring that it was unlawful (*harám*) for a man to touch the arm of a woman. But, retorted the president, when every woman allows her arm to be touched by the pedlar (*maniár*) when he fits her with a bangle, what was the harm in allowing a doctor to touch her for her good? The people, however, sided with the mullah. But to-day they said that if a woman were sent to do the inoculation, they would not object. If this attitude is general, it is a strong argument for more women doctors. In so genuinely progressive a village it was natural to find that the problem of sanitation had been satisfactorily solved. The village is swept daily, and the refuse carried to the fields. This is done by the village sweepers, who are paid for the extra work involved. Instead of getting a 'chapati'[1] every third day from each family, they now receive one every day, and at each harvest ten to fifteen per cent more grain.

The Village Midwife

One bad old custom has been left untouched. Neither village has a trained midwife (*dai*). In Siwara there are three midwives. One is the wife of a sweeper, another of a Jogi, and the third of an oilman. The last is blind and past work. The position of a sweeper is too well known to need description. Jogis are 'one of the lowest of all castes and receive the offerings made to the impure gods'. Oilmen, or Telis as they are called, rank higher but are still only village menials. In the other village the only midwife belongs to another beggar caste called Baráhi. In both villages the midwife gets a rupee for a boy and eight annas for a girl. The Indian attitude towards the birth of a girl is well expressed by the difference. In each case the midwife gets the clothes worn by the mother when the child is born. This is no great gift, because the oldest clothes are worn for birth.[2]

Siwara impressed me as a good village with a keen spirit. It was interesting, therefore, to find that eighteen years ago the villagers, feeling the need of a good mullah, sent an emissary to Jullundur with instructions to bring back a mullah who, as they expressed it, would say to them—do not steal, do no villainy (*badmáshi*). The man was found and has been here ever since.

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[1] A girdle cake of unleavened bread.

[2] *Karnal Gaz.*, 1918, p. 101.

Untouchables

The feeling about untouchability in this tahsil is fully as strong as in Una. Untouchables mostly have their own wells, and sometimes their own tanks. Where they have neither, they employ a Hindu water-carrier to draw water for them morning and evening. In the village schools their children sit apart and may not play with the others. Everywhere the custom of sprinkling water over the person prevails, but, as in Dasuya and Garshankar where the Arya Samajh has been at work, it is going out with the new generation, and men are becoming more broadminded on the subject.

Cattle and Religion

In Garshankar old and useless cattle are freely sold to butchers, but here, amongst both Hindus and Sikhs, feeling against this is as strong as in Una. No one ever sells either bullock or cow because it is old. As a cultivator remarked to-day: 'When a bullock has worked ten years for me, am I to sell it because it can work no longer? I am not so entirely without pity as that.' Speaking of the blind mare that carried him on one of his tours in France, Arthur Young wrote: 'Without eyes she has carried me in safety 1,500 miles; and for the rest of her life she shall have no other master than myself.'[1] The feeling in both cases is the same and, deriving straight from the human heart, is not to be lightly brushed aside, whether it applies to horse, bullock, or cow. Sometimes Hindu traders come along and buy cattle ostensibly for their own use but really to sell to butchers. A Muhammadan 'sufedposh'[2] who was with me said that many Muhammadans, too, will not sell their old stock. When asked whether more did this than not, he replied, 'All do it whose minds are good.'

Hindu and Muhammadan Relations

In villages where Hindu and Muhammadan live together, the Muhammadans invite the local prohit to their weddings and give him a rupee, which is, no doubt, a survival of the days when they were Hindus and the family priest attended as a matter of course. In some villages the Hindus return the compliment and invite the mullah and offer a rupee to the mosque. In Rohtak, says a member of my staff who belongs to that district, there are many villages where a piece of land was given by Muhammadan villagers to their family priest long ago before they became Muhammadan, and where his descendant still goes once a year to obtain the customary offering of a rupee or two, though he no longer lives there and his family has long since given up the plot of land. Here, too, there are instances of this. Unfortunately, these old courtesies between the two great communities are being undermined by the communalistic tendencies of the time. Last June, in a village three miles from Rupar, there was a bad riot resulting in the loss of ten lives, but it was mainly due to the instigation of townsfolk, and the communalism that engendered it has happily not spread to the villages round. A recent district board election also aroused a certain amount of party feeling, in one tahsil dividing Hindu and Muhammadan, and in another Rajput and Jat. In this case Hindu and Muhammadan Rajputs combined. The election has not, however, left any lasting bitterness, and it is generally said that so far communalism has made little headway in the village.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

[2] A rural notable of the yeoman type.

Manauli

As we approached Manauli the people who met us all began to complain of the depredations of the game which strayed on to their fields from the territory of a neighbouring State, where they are presumably preserved. Like the peasants of pre-Revolution France, they entreated protection.[1] A man had spent Rs.300 on a wire fence to guard a new fruit and vegetable garden, and even this did not always keep them out. The approaches to Manauli, a village of about 2,000 inhabitants, could hardly have been filthier, and to complete one's disgust an oil engine was making the beautiful evening hideous with its incessant hiccuping. The people who came out to meet us complained bitterly of it: they could not hear themselves speak: it was near the school and made teaching difficult, and it went on till midnight and disturbed their rest. An old fort built in the eighteenth century by some Muhammadan freebooter gives a certain character to this derelict spot. We are now almost past Kasauli and look straight up to the Chor (11,982 feet), first seen a week ago from the hills above Una. It looked most beautiful in the evening light as the flame of the setting sun passed for a moment over its snowy crest.

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[1] Cf. 'Nous demandons à grands cris la destruction . . . de toute sorte de gibier' (*Cahier de Mantes et Meulan*, quoted by Arthur Young, *op. cit.*, p. 330).

[13 MILES]

December 18*th.* MANAULI *to* MUBARIKPUR

Rajputs and Pardah

Our way to-day lay along the worst roads that we have so far traversed, and at one point disappeared under water for 100 yards. I was accompanied by a Sikh sufedposh and a Muhammadan Rajput. Talk turned on the employment of women. In the last two or three years they have taken to weaving dhurries, girdles (*azárband*), towels, and pillow cases; for since they gave up grinding, they have plenty of time, and weavers' labour is much dearer than it was. The Rajput women, being in pardah, have too much time: they churn, cook, wash, and spin, and then sit idle. There is no sign yet of pardah breaking down. All the Rajputs I have talked to agree in this. But two Rajputs I saw later admitted that the only thing that kept Muhammadan women in pardah was the belief that it was enjoined by religion; but for this they would soon come out, because it was so difficult for women in pardah to be healthy. As one of the Rajputs said: 'We are five brothers and five workers in the fields; but if there were no pardah, we should be ten workers, and there would be some one to bring us our 'roti'.[1] Now we have to return to our houses to eat, and we must even carry on our heads the wood for the fire.' A more orthodox view was expressed to one of my Rajput officers, when he began advising fellow-Rajputs that women should come out of pardah: 'In God's name hold your peace; are you not a Muhammadan?' In this case orthodoxy involves serious economic disabilities. Having no one to bring them their roti, Rajputs are often tempted to stop at home till the morning meal is over, and having nothing to do 'huddle together in the village rest-house and smoke; and when at last they struggle out at 10 or 11 in the morning, they are half stupefied and not in a condition to work well for the short half-day remaining'.[2]

Artisans and Menials

We also talked about village artisans and menials. The tanner, the carpenter, and the blacksmith have all greatly improved their position: the sweeper too can earn more, but he is an extravagant fellow and spends all he gets. Some one said that the barber and the carpenter might now be found amongst the money-lenders; but where there are Better Living societies and costly marriages are banned, the barber earns less than he did, for as the official go-between he makes much out of a showy wedding and in the central Punjab is popularly known as Rajah. The blacksmith and the carpenter now do only repairs in return for the grain they get at harvest, and they charge through the nose for anything they sell. Similarly, the tanner has started charging for the shoes he makes, though he still gets the skins for nothing. The Rajput, pointing to the red slippers he was wearing, said that he had had to pay Rs.2/2 for them. The dhobi or washerman is doing as well as any one, for far more washing is done—probably twice as much as before. The old idea that it was a sin

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[1] Literally bread, but includes whatever is eaten with it. The word should be noted, as it recurs frequently.

[2] Writing in 1918, the Settlement Officer says that, 'with a few honourable exceptions,' this description, penned in 1893, still holds good.

(*páp*) to allow any one else to wash your dhoti[1] (because of its intimate connexion with the person) is losing ground and the new generation sends its dhoties to the wash with everything else. Women for the most part still wash their own clothes.

Service versus Agriculture

On the way we found a Sikh jagirdar[2] ploughing. Though the annual value of his jagir was only Rs.300, a jagirdar is always a person of some consequence, and it was pleasant, as in the case of the retired military officer we met two days ago, to find that personal consequence did not prevent him handling the plough. He showed us a new well (thirty feet deep to the water) that he had recently sunk for Rs.2,000: he had paid another Rs.130 for its Persian wheel. The result of this enterprise was a field of potatoes, another of chillies, and a third of garlic, all of which were new crops to the neighbourhood. Education was mentioned, for he has five sons. Three are at school, one looks after the cattle, and the youngest is an infant. 'Up to the eighth class', he said, 'a boy is not spoilt for work in the fields, but after that he becomes too weak. The only object of education is service, because service means regular pay and a regular income. Whether the season is good or bad, the man in service gets his roti, while the cultivator often has to go hungry.' In Una, service was praised for the same reason.[3] 'But', continued the jagirdar, 'service is difficult to get nowadays, for the rich as well as the poor send their boys to school, and they are able to pay the fees of the higher classes; so their boys get the service, and ours are left behind.'

Mendicants

Our next encounter was with two sadhus, one in white with a begging bowl, and the other, a Sikh, dressed like an ordinary peasant and quite as able-bodied. This one said he had given up the world (in other words, work) seven years ago, and he spent his time repeating the name of God. His white-clad companion had come from near Patna, and was wandering northwards begging his way and staying in a place as long as he could support himself upon its charity. A little later we met another Sikh sadhu, dressed in saffron and as able-bodied as the last. That the village community should be willing to support such sturdy men hardly tends to its prosperity.

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[1] A cloth tied round the waist and hanging down to the knees with the ends passed between the legs and fastened at the back.

[2] A person to whom a jagir or an assignment of land revenue has been made.

[3] See p. 9.

A co-operative Adult School

In pleasant contrast were the members of a co-operative adult school who met us on the road. They were being taught by a peasant co-operator, because the local schoolmaster did not feel like doing it himself. Though the peasant had read only up to the fifth class and the school had been working for barely a year, three of his twenty-six pupils had recently passed the Education Department's test.

At Mubarikpur we forded the Ghaggar. Finding no place amongst the five rivers of the Punjab, it pricks its shallow way across Ambala, Patiala, and Hissar, and finally buries itself in the sands of Bikaner. Yet in the monsoon, such heavy floods come down from the hills that in old days the Simla mails used to be carried across by elephant, and now an iron railway bridge with many piers is required.

[10 MILES]

PART II—THE NARAINGARH TAHSIL

December 19*th*. MUBARIKPUR *to* GARHI

The Naraingarh Tahsil

In crossing the Ghaggar we have almost passed from the Punjab into the United Provinces. The Jamna, the political boundary between the two, is not far away; the smaller more refined type of Hindustan is beginning to appear, and with a higher rainfall (43 inches) the mango groves are increasing in number and size. But where the rainfall is high, vitality is low; and where vitality is low, character suffers. Settlement officers have little that is good to say of the people. The Jats, who are so 'thrifty and industrious' in Kharar, are here 'corrupted by the shiftless incompetency of those who surround them'.[1] The latter are the Rajputs, mostly Muhammadans, who own 37 per cent of the cultivated area.[2] Lazy, extravagant, and heavily indebted, they were going from bad to worse till co-operation came amongst them with its call to effort and hope of redemption. There are now nearly 200 village banks in the tahsil, and though many are not firmly rooted, they promise to usher in a new era.[3]

Bullock Cart and Motor.

Breakfasting in the sunshine on the high bank overlooking the Ghaggar with the line of the Kasauli and Morvi hills not far away, I watched the bullock carts struggling with the difficulties of the steep sandy slopes in the bed of the Ghaggar. Even with all hands to the wheels and the free use of the whip they hardly moved, and for a time one was completely stuck. It was impossible not to contrast this with the ease with which motor-cars were crossing the river on a well-laid track marked with white-painted stones and smoothed and strengthened by a steel net stretched 300 yards from bank to bank. Later on in the day when we were talking about roads, the contrast was mentioned critically by one of those with me.[4] Part of the road we came by to-day—a district board road—was as bad as road could be, and yet it could have been made passable, which it barely was for carts, without much difficulty or expense. When I commented on this, I was told that it was bad because 'officers' rarely came this way. At Kot, a large village at which we stopped to see some societies, the people were more philosophic than I was about their roads. They said that they had never repaired their roads collectively, that every one repaired any bit that worried him, and that really the roads around them were good enough, since the ground was high and the water did not lie.

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[1] *Naraingarh A. R.*, 1918, p. 8.

[2] *Ambala Settlement Report*, 1921, p. 7.

[3] For the Rajputs as they were see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[4] I understand that something has since been done to assist the bullock cart and make the contrast less glaring.

Sanitation and 'Uplift'

When we arrived at Kot, the villagers were careful to point out that the manure heaps were no longer in the middle of the village but on the common land just outside it. Asked why they had made this change, they replied, '*Huzur ka hukm*—it is your Honour's order.' It was no order of mine, I said. 'It was somebody's order', they replied, and they added: 'There is much trouble (*taklif*). As there is not enough common land for everybody's heap near the village, many must carry their manure across the nullah (there was a broad ditch 100 yards away), and how is this to be done when the nullah is full of water?' All along our route we have heard much the same complaint. Where the manure is stacked outside instead of inside the village, it is frankly admitted that this has been done 'by order'. This is the result of a systematic effort that is being made in this district to follow Gurgaon.[1] The more intelligent see the point, but to most it is another task imposed from above. The benefit of reforms effected in this way may well be doubted, but there can be no possible doubt that reform is necessary, for the farther south we go, the filthier become the villages. The large villages or kasbas are the worst—for example, Manauli yesterday and Raipur to-day, which was almost unbelievably filthy. If only the simple precept enjoined by Moses in Deuteronomy xxiii. 13[2] had been followed, or even taught in the schools, the surroundings of innumerable villages would not now be places of horror, and incidentally the fertility of the soil would be increased.

'Better Living'

With about 100 others, nearly all Muhammadan

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[1] See Ch. V.

[2] 'And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee.'

Rajputs, we settled down comfortably for the work of the day under a large neem tree, which was so old that no one knew when it was planted. The members of three Better Living societies were present. All three were thoroughly alive, and a number of people had been fined for breach of rule, and contrary to usual practice had been made to pay. One, for instance, had paid Rs.2 for giving a feast to his caste-fellows at his wedding; another, 8 annas, because his wife got a Mirasi[1] woman to beat the drum and dance to her. Both these old customs have been forbidden as they lead to waste. Two more had been fined Rs.10 for allowing women of their families to go out marketing. The societies forbid this, partly because it is opposed to the pardah system and exposes women to the risk of improper attentions; and partly because men think that, knowing nothing of market rates, women sell their produce too dear, and being naturally wasteful, buy more than they need.

The age of marriage is comparatively high amongst Muhammadan Rajputs—18 to 20 for a boy and 14 to 17 for a girl. The marriage of a boy of middle position used to cost four or five hundred rupees, and that of a girl seven or eight hundred. Now it has been reduced to Rs.200 or less. One of those present said he had recently married three girls together for Rs.150. Another said with a blush that he had been married for one rupee four annas. As in the village visited yesterday, jewellery is less worn than before because it impedes work, which suggests that women are working harder.

Homespun

The women wear very little homespun (*khaddar*), preferring the more delicate machine-made tissues; but they still spin the yarn for their husbands' clothes. They do not, however, weave, unless themselves wives of weavers. The men of course have never done any spinning and laughed when Mr. Gandhi's idea was explained to them. Yet it might be a blessing to them, for they have no domestic industry of any kind, and their cultivation, which depends entirely upon the rain, should leave them plenty of leisure from now onwards till harvest-time. This they did not entirely endorse, saying that the weeding of the wheat would take a month and that then they would have to prepare their lands for the next sowings. That, however, many have leisure is shown by the fact that the more energetic go off with their carts to the Kalka road to cart stones, and those who have no carts to the Ghaggar to work as stone-breakers. Of all those who were seated under the neem tree only two were completely clothed in homespun. Both were men of the generation that is disappearing, and one, the elder of the two, was the headman of the village. He was spotlessly attired in white. The other, in discoloured drab, was a less good advertisement of the old ways. Most were wrapped in a homespun cotton sheet (*chaddar*), but wore a mill-made shirt below; and almost all had mill-made puggarees. The change from homespun to machine-made cloth began less recently than might be supposed. As long ago as 1887 the settlement officer wrote that 'the mass of the agricultural population . . . do not spend much on food, but the expenditure on clothing has risen greatly, because the people have largely given up their coarse homespun for inferior English clothes'.[1]

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[1] The minstrel caste.

Birth and Death

I had a look at the register of births and deaths kept by the village watchman—a dirty tattered affair telling of real tragedy, for last March plague came upon the village and carried of 45. They were all inoculated, they said, even their women; but it must have been too late, for only two or three of those who succumbed had been done. There was no difficulty with the women, for when they realized that this was a possible means of escape from the terror around them, they asked to be done. One would think there must also be terror in birth, since in the two villages represented, none of the midwives is trained. Two are village menials (wives of an oilman and a sweeper), one the wife of a fakir, and the fourth, unexpectedly, a Rajput. Hoping that here was an opportunity of escape from the usual untrained menial, I suggested that she should be trained. But they shook their heads and said she was too old to learn.

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[1] *Jagadhri A. R.*, 1887, p. 40: the Jagadhri tahsil marches with that of Naraingarh.

Vegetables

I noticed a boy carrying a cauliflower. For the last year or two cauliflowers have been coming out from Ambala, 25 miles away. The banias' carts go in with the grain and bring out vegetables, which are eagerly bought by the peasants. They admitted that this had much improved their diet, but they cannot grow them as they have no wells. Later in the day I passed a Saini's holding on high ground beside a cho, where a well had just been sunk and potatoes, turnips, and chillies were being grown. If this kind of thing is being done in this remote part of the world with no good market about, there must be much more of it round the towns. A small point worth noting is that in this neighbourhood, as there is plenty of wood about, dung-cakes are used only to simmer the milk.

Indigenous Co-operation

I asked the people what forms of indigenous co-operation still survived in the village. They pointed to the pukka building just behind where we were sitting. Here the householders of the patti[1] meet for common counsel, and in its large open room guests and travellers are put up. Each patti—there are four in the village—has one, and all were built by a levy on every house in the patti. This one had cost from Rs.600 to 700. The dhurries at our feet were also the property of the patti; so, too, some large vessels (*deg*) for cooking rice on the scale required by a wedding and other great occasions. All the drinking wells are repaired at the general cost, and sometimes a watchman is employed to guard the crops from theft. This practice is common in the tahsil, since village menials are no honester than they should be, and the general fragmentation of land makes separate watch and ward impossible. Apropos of the village menial's weakness, some one mentioned, as we passed a field of fine Coimbatore sugar-cane (grown on *baráni*[1] land), that one of its great merits was that it was not stolen, because its rind was too thick for chewing; and he added that the more predatory animals found the same difficulty in dealing with it.

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[1] A division or section of the village.

Brahmin Wayfarers

The most interesting people we met on the road to-day were three pygmy Brahmins in rags on their way from the Himalayan valleys below Gangotri, where the Ganges rises, to Amritsar and Lahore to claim their annual dues from their patrons or clients (*jajmán*). It seems that during the summer they minister to the spiritual needs of pilgrims who visit the sources of the Ganges, and that they have established regular ties with a number of families who regard a pilgrimage to the Ganges as a necessary act of piety to be performed from time to time. Amongst the latter they mentioned two well-known Hindu families of Lahore. They had come on foot the twenty-one marches from their mountain fastnesses, passing through Hardwar, which is a mere eight marches away. I felt some sympathy, indeed almost a bond with them, since they intended taking the route which I had just followed. And what would they get for so long a journey? 'Three or four hundred rupees and new clothes' they said: enough, it seems, to set them up for the coming year.

A Village Money-lender

Passing through a village of Sainis, we met a Khatri money-lender returning from dunning some recalcitrant client. 'These are not days', he grumbled, 'when one can recover what one has lent. The old days were better. The zemindars now are poor and pay back nothing. Especially is it so with the Rajputs, the Sainis are honourable men (*sharif*)—this was a compliment to his surroundings—and pay back something. One of my clients borrowed Rs.70 and took Rs.25 in grain. With Rs.20 of interest and Rs.5 for expenses he owed me Rs.120. In return he gave me a buffalo in full settlement, and the buffalo fetched a bare Rs.70. That is what the zemindar does. When pressed he offers you an old buffalo: he takes cash and gives you back aged cattle.' 'What else can we do?' asked a zemindar who was standing by. 'We have to turn the cash into cattle, and that is all we have. Also the sahukar[1] claps on fifteen or twenty years' interest to what he lent us, and then robs us of our cattle.' I asked the money-lender whether he always gave his clients a receipt. Invariably, he said. Again the zemindar interposed: 'Only when we have paid back everything.'

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[1] Land entirely dependent on rain.

The rest of the conversation may be given as follows:

'How much interest do you charge?'

'*Paisa rupya*' (18¾ per cent).

'How much do you make a year in five or ten years?'

'Eight annas' (6 per cent).

'Then why don't you deposit your money with a co-operative bank which will give you as much or more?'

'The People's Bank failed and the Alliance Bank failed. The members of your banks come to me and say: since we stopped dealing with you, we are in great trouble, because we have to go to Mubarikpur' (probably a crafty allusion to yesterday's meeting, to which members were summoned by the society's secretary).

'Do you lend to those who belong to a bank?'

'Not if I know that they belong, but they sometimes conceal it from me.'

'On no account lend to them,' I said; and with that word of advice, which I fear he is not likely to take, we parted. He was the ordinary type of village money-lender, whose power has been greatly undermined by Co-operation and the Land Alienation Act.

Money-lending

All agree that the money-lender is still powerful along the foot of the hills, roughly speaking from Anandpur onwards,[1] that he charges discount on his loans, exacts free services (*begár*) and free fuel, fodder, and ghi, and takes his dues as much in grain as in cash. The average rate of interest, too, is 25 instead of the usual 18¾ per cent. I am reminded of another submontane tract, the Shakargarh tahsil, which I knew ten years ago. All these features existed there, but under the influence of co-operation and better communications they have largely disappeared. What gives a money-lender power in a tract of this kind is its inaccessibility. The cultivator is so far from a good market that he cannot get a proper price for his produce, and so isolated and ignorant of business that he falls readily into the hands of the sahukar, who is both money-lender and dealer. In such a case, only two things can save him—thrift and a strong village community. In the secluded valley of Kulu, both are present and there is very little debt; but in the mountainous tract of Seráj separating Kulu from the Simla hills there is neither, and many of the peasants are virtual serfs. On the North-West Frontier again, there may not be thrift but there is a strong clan feeling, and the clansmen are personally so formidable that, inaccessibile as the region is, the Hindu money-lender is in no danger of unduly asserting himself. The worst thing said against him round here—and it is bad enough—is that it is the simple and ignorant whom he cheats most. By others he may himself be cheated, and my staff agree that in this respect the fault is by no means entirely on the money-lender's side. They agree, too, that the Hindu money-lender does not treat a Muhammadan client worse than a Hindu: if he is bad, he is equally bad to both. Nor has he much political influence at elections, except here and there where his influence is still untouched by the times.

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[1] Village money-lender.

Roads

The money-lender would be less powerful in this submontane country were the roads better. To-day's road was so bad that at one point the bullock cart carrying my kit turned bodily over. In the middle of the last century, the settlement officer, Captain Wynyard, wrote that the roads in Ambala were 'the worst in India' and that it was 'unsafe to travel at any pace faster than a walk'.[1] So far as this neighbourhood is concerned, things are much as they were. Another inconvenience encountered here, and at this time of year even worse than a bad road, is a smoking chimney.

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[1] Cf. p. 24.

[14 MILES]

December 20th. GARHI *to* NARAINGARH

Pardah and the Amir

A Muhammadan Rajput zaildar came to see me before I started, and speaking of pardah said that the Amir's action in breaking it down in Afghanistan had led to much talk in the villages. There were two parties, orthodox and unorthodox, and even the women were beginning to talk. He himself was in favour of giving it up, and one of his reasons for this was that with the increased security there was no longer any need for it. Later in the day at the village of Bhurewala, where there was a great concourse of Muhammadan Rajputs there was much shaking of the head over the Amir; he had acted contrary to Islam, and so had come revolt.

Boy Scouts

A cloud of horsemen, all Rajputs, met me a mile from Bhurewala, and we had a varied two hours in the village. The meeting-place was on the far side, but we were not allowed to approach it through the village, in case we might be tempted to look over the high pardah walls as we rode through. So we went round instead. A party of boy scouts were drawn up to greet us. One boy was wearing English walking shoes—called 'boots' in the vernacular—which he had purchased for Rs. 2/6. The others wore country shoes costing from one to two rupees. The boy with the 'boots' said he preferred them to country shoes, as the sand did not get into them. All wore stockings (at six annas a pair), which seems a foolish bit of imitation of what may be necessary in the West but is surely superfluous in this stockingless country. We had great difficulty in getting any reply to the question—what has a boy scout to do? Finally, one said that he had to give help. When asked what help he had given during the last year, he said he had helped to put out a fire and had removed thorn bushes from the road. The uniform these boys were wearing costs three rupees—another tax imposed upon the villager by reform. The ordinary villager does not much like these impositions; and it is one reason why the 'clean the village' policy is unpopular, for, as already noted, it means paying the sweepers more. In this tract any addition would be felt, for the customary payment —no doubt because the Rajputs require more work done for them—is one 'chapati' a day, and not one every third day as in the country we passed through three days ago. Yet, though the villager heartily dislikes fresh impositions even in the sacred name of reform, he will accept them cheerfully enough when persuaded that they are for his good. The Boy Scout movement with its ideal of glad healthy youth and service for the common good offers so much that is of value to village life that every effort should be made to get the villager to support it. But for this purpose, whatever may be done in the case of village sanitation, the arts of persuasion and the force of example should be employed and the spur of authority eschewed; and that the movement may take deep root, the pace of its development should not outstrip the proper grounding of all concerned in the knowledge and practice of its invigorating principles.

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[1] *Naraingarh A. R.*, 1918, p. 6.

Other forms of Co-operation

I asked all who were wearing nothing but homespun to stand up. With difficulty three were found in the crowd of sixty or seventy, and they were all men of the older generation. Grinding is still the rule in the zenana, but spinning is waning owing to the inroad of machine-made cloth. Some zenanas have learnt to knit socks from a family which was taught the art by a missionary lady in Patiala. There was a society for compulsory education in the village. One member had had to be fined for not sending his boy to school; but, as usual, the fine was remitted on promise of amendment. A difficulty with compulsory education in many areas is that an only child is required to look after the cattle when they graze. Here a common herd is employed by groups of cultivators. The other arrangements made in common are much the same as those described yesterday:[1] three large vessels and some dhurries are kept for weddings, a watchman looks after the crops, and the drinking-wells are repaired at the general expense. An entirely new form of co-operative society was springing up spontaneously. An intelligent Rajput had persuaded a number of his neighbours to join with him in keeping poultry, and a start had been made with 84 fowls, 80 guinea-fowls, and 60 geese. A Gujar and a sweeper looked after them, and a munshi or clerk kept the accounts. It is proposed to sell in the Simla market in summer. Altogether a remarkable enterprise for Rajputs.

Hospitality

Before we left, we had to submit to a perfect orgy of complimentary poems and songs, and finally we were taken into a room where three tables were set covered with piles of oranges and apples, of which we were invited to partake. The result of a short and friendly struggle with our most hospitable host, who wanted us to accept the lot, was that each of the boy scouts received an apple or an orange, and one orange was taken for the party—the latter in deference to our host, who said that his izzat would be completely destroyed if we took nothing. For the grass which our ponies consumed during our stay we contributed a rupee to the mosque. Thus, honour was saved on both sides. The hospitality of the East is, perhaps, its most engaging trait. Throughout India, and probably throughout Asia, it ranks as one of the three cardinal virtues, and there is good reason for this, seeing that there are no inns, and serais are few and far between. Every village acknowledges the traveller's right to a night's food and lodging. In Muhammadan villages he will generally be accommodated at the mosque, in Sikh at the Gurdwara, and in both cases the person in charge sees to his comfort. In Hindu villages there are no fixed arrangements, but if he goes to the chowpal or common meeting hall, he will probably find some one who will provide him with bread and bed. But owing to the spread of the lorry, there are far fewer travellers than before craving a night's shelter.

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[1] p. 72.

[9 MILES]

December 21st.

Pardah

Our second day's halt. Many came to see me, amongst them a Pathan, the president of that rare thing, an A class co-operative society.[1] Had he heard, I asked, of the Amir's order about Pardah? 'I have not been there,' he replied; 'the country is far, but a rumour is heard that he has published a Gazette saying—set your women free; let them walk out. Most think it good. They will be healthy; they will walk for two or four hours; it will do them good.' The Hindu Rajput who followed, a gentleman with an almost coal-black complexion and a thick lower lip, said that for four or five years there had been discussion about pardah in the village, but not more than 5 per cent would like to give it up. Why did Hindus observe pardah when there was nothing in their religion to make them do so? '*Purána riváj*—it is the old custom' was the reply. The reply shows how little difference there is in India between custom and religion, for Hindu and Muhammadan Rajputs are equally strict, and the one found themselves upon custom, and the other upon religion. Actually, both probably sprang from necessity. The Rajput said that in his village grinding had been given up, but the making of dhurries, girdles, and webbing for beds, and the knitting of socks were done in its place. These arts had been acquired from relatives who lived across the Jamna in Sahâranpur and Muzaffarnagar. A point upon which they were very strict was in not selling their useless cattle. Traders might tempt them, but the temptation was resisted. No one however objected to castration: nor, so far, have I found any one who did.

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[1] In the Punjab village banks are divided into four classes.

Village Refuse

Talking about manure and the new policy, the Rajput said that it was difficult to get the manure taken from the village to the fields, because the sweepers pressed them for more pay and also for a donkey or buffalo to transport it there. How, too, are they to see that every one's manure is dumped on his own ground and not on the nearest fields? A Hindu Gujar who followed said that the Gujars at the foot of the hills had always carried their manure to their fields instead of depositing it by their houses or just outside the village. This was because the ground was too much up and down for carts to cross the fields, and as manure had in any case to be carried, this was best done every day. Yesterday on our way we discussed whether the time had come to compel villages to be clean. The two or three Rajputs with me thought that it had, for all the educated wanted their villages kept clean, realizing the importance of this to health. To-day, too, an experienced Indian official remarked to me: 'Without fear nothing can be done.'

A Mortgage Bank

There is a new co-operative mortgage bank here. It operates over the whole tahsil and advances landowners sums varying, for the most part, from one to three thousand rupees. No one may have more than thirty times the land revenue payable on the land mortgaged; and as the land revenue does not exceed 25 per cent of the net income of the land, this means that he cannot get more than what the land will bring him in net in 7½ years; and even this is subject to a limit of Rs.5,000. Loans are generally made for the redemption of land, but never for its purchase, since at present prices this is uneconomic with money borrowed at 9 per cent, the rate charged by the bank. Loans are also made for the liquidation of unsecured debts, and are available for the improvement of land; but there is little demand for money on this account. Debt in this tahsil is heavy,[1] and till mortgaged acres are redeemed and old debt paid off, a man cannot be expected to think much about development. All loans have to be paid back within ten years in two annual instalments—one at each harvest. Some would like a longer period, but till zemindars can be trusted to make a wise use of money and pay it back regularly harvest by harvest, this would be dangerous. Even village banks with all their facilities for recovery and dealing only in short-term loans—the longest period is three years—find it difficult to recover most of them within the stipulated period, and every year legal proceedings have to be taken against over 12,000 defaulters.[2] It is largely a question of character, and the whole scope of a co-operative mortgage bank depends upon the character of its members. Another difficulty is to find within the somewhat narrow limits of a tahsil[3] a sufficient number of reliable intelligent landowners able and willing faithfully to discharge the duties of a director without payment. These are much more onerous than in a village bank. Every application for a loan must be carefully investigated on the spot and made the subject of a confidential report; and when a loan is made a director must see, in a case of land redemption, that it is actually paid to the mortgagee, and in a case of repayment of old debt, that it is paid to the money-lender concerned and his receipt obtained. This is done to prevent misapplication of loans, which might otherwise be common. Then there are frequent committee meetings to attend, and these usually take time, for reports have to be carefully scrutinized and many other points incidental to the loan of large sums to be considered. To many it is a great temptation to back the application of a relative or friend irrespective of its merits; and when the wrong men are chosen as directors, worse occurs. Fortunately there was nothing worse here than inexperience, which the directors were keen to remedy. But even this has its dangers. Three loans of about Rs.2,000 each had been made six or seven months ago for the redemption of land without ascertaining whether the mortgagee—it was the same man in each case—was prepared to hand over the land in question, of which he had possession. When he was approached with the redemption money, he refused and suits had to be filed. These are still pending, and meanwhile the money is lying idle, and each borrower has become liable for nearly Rs.100 in interest charges which should never have been incurred. The case shows how even with the best intentions a mortgage bank may do harm. On the whole, however, it is doing good.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[2] In 1928 there were in the Punjab 14,438 agricultural credit societies (excluding central banking institutions), with 418,423 members (*Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the Punjab for 1927–8*, p. xxxvi).

[3] There are from three to six tahsils in a district, according to the size of the district.

In the evening we visited a small Muhammadan Rajput village. Though it was only a mile from Naraingarh, which is the headquarters of a tahsil, not a single boy from it went to school. They had once had a bank, but something went wrong with it, and it had to be wound up. As we went there, we had a good view of Nahan, the capital of the hill State of Sirmur, 'mountain-built with peaceful citadel'.[1]

December 22*nd*. NARAINGARH *to* SADHAURA

Landlords We rode nine miles through a country of magnificent mango trees, which with the embattled sugar-cane broke the level stretches of emerald green, where the young wheat is now vigorously sprouting. There were, of course, the usual chos—we have had them on almost every march—and, as usual, there was no sign of any effort to curb their depredations. I gather that there is not a landlord in the district who is doing anything in this direction. Yet what an opportunity to acquire merit—and remembrance! But though there are many big landlords in this district, there are few who rise to their opportunities. In 1918 the settlement officer wrote as follows of those in this tahsil: 'It cannot be said that the countryside benefits from the existence of the large landowners. . . . Nothing is done by them to effect improvements by the adoption of up-to-date methods of agriculture or the import of selected seed; they appear to have no sense of their duty as large proprietors.'[1] My inquiries suggest that in the last ten years there has been no marked change for the better. In this tahsil two of the largest estates are under the court of wards, and five more have only been released in the last three years. An official, who has been here nearly eighteen months, tells me that he has never even seen one of the biggest landlords. 'He only appears when the Lat Sahib[2] comes.' Of another absentee someone else said: 'He comes only one-and-a-half times a year, and then only for a few days.' A few, however, give their tenants advances, and two (one is a bania) have sunk tube wells. But if the big landlords of the district wish to be abreast of the times, most of them will have to do far more for their land and tenants than they have done in the past. Some of them even might be well advised to take a trip to Russia or Roumania to see what short shrift a bad landlord gets when passions are roused.

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[1] Keats, 'Ode to a Grecian Urn'.

A Rajput Village

We visited a small village of Muhammadan Rajputs on the way. All Rajput villages have a tumbledown look. This is because amongst Rajputs the replastering of the walls, which is normally done once or twice a year by the women of the household, has to be done by the men as the women are in pardah, and the men have not the time or the inclination to do it regularly. The villagers had just finished their wheat sowings and were on the point of starting to crush their cane. Though they had no occupation of any kind apart from their fields, they declared they had no time for weeding; nor was it the custom anywhere in the district to weed. They were surprised to hear that we had seen people at it round Kharar. The patwari says that in a barani village of this kind (the chief crops are wheat, maize, and cane) 13 acres are required to keep a family of five in comfort, which is not very different from the other estimates given me on this tour. Most have not as much as this and have to eke out their living as best they can. He described their condition as straitened (*tangdast*). There are about fifty Rajput families in the village, and 50 per cent or more keep a few poultry (two to five each, it was said), partly for home consumption, and partly for sale. A fowl is a useful bird to have in case a guest turns up unexpectedly, but they are not liked overmuch, because they foul the fodder, which has to be given to the cattle, and the manure, which has to be made into dung-cakes. It is significant that it is generally the thriftiest who keep them, and as they sell milk and ghi as well, they are often more comfortably off than their neighbours.

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[1] *Naraingarh A. R.*, 1918, p. 6.

[2] The vernacular name for the Governor of the Province.

Outside the village was a small red-brick memorial (*khera*), set up when the village was founded and still the object of puja to the Hindus, who burn a lamp there every Thursday. Swung high across the road was a potsherd tied to two trees by a rope, under which the cattle were made to pass not long ago when some disease visited them. The potsherd was inscribed with a spell (*tawiz*) from the Koran written by a half-witted mullah who looks after the spiritual needs of the village. This youth was sent to Aligarh to study and, becoming involved in a disturbance (*fasád*), presumably a riot, got shot in the thigh. It is characteristic of the relation between field and mosque that being too weak to work in the one he has been set to look after the other.

Wayfarers

Crossing a cho, we fell in with a bania in a flowered quilted waistcoat who was driving into Naraingarh to hear judgement delivered in a criminal case, in which he was the accused. He was in evident alarm and could hardly hold up his head. The case, one of common assault, had cost him Rs.225 to 250. His pleader came from Ambala and charged Rs.20 a hearing. He had borrowed a friend's bheli, a small canopied two-wheeled cart, and its brass fittings shone so brightly that I could not help expressing my admiration. 'Yes,' said the driver, 'the sand has made them shine.'

The next person we met was a Saini youth wearing a dhoti gathered up round his slender loins and a very bright unbuttoned yellow waistcoat. He was much more cheerful than the bania, and with reason, for he was bound for the house of his father-in-law to bring home his bride for their 'second marriage'. He had on his head a large bundle containing two rupees' worth of sweetmeat (*ladhu*) for his in-laws.

We then met a peasant on his way to report about his buffalo, who had been ill, to the local vet. So good is the latter and so trusted by the people that they go to him when they themselves are ill—a good example of the power of trust where simple people are concerned. Finally, we met the headman of a village riding into Naraingarh to obey a summons from the tahsil. The vaccinator had reported that a certain girl had not been produced to be vaccinated, but had omitted to mention that she was dead.

At one point an old Seyyed came out to meet us. I asked him how the village of to-day compared with the village of his youth. He poured forth the usual praise of the past—there was more litigation, more falsehood, and less religion; and the people were poorer and their charges had increased. But he admitted that they were better fed and better clothed, and that in their dealings with the money-lender they had less trouble (*taklif*). A little later we passed a townlet boasting a municipal committee with a non-official president. I asked those who had come out to meet us whether they liked that. 'No,' they replied, for it meant weaker control and favouritism (*ruh-rihayat*). Towards the end of the march there swam into our ken the heights of Garhwal, which overlook the United Provinces and cradle the Ganges.

A Country Doctor

At Sadhaura, a town of about 8,000 inhabitants that dates back to the days of Mahmud of Ghazni, I was visited by a remarkable man, a Muhammadan Rajput, the headman of three villages, a member of the municipal committee, and a hakím or country doctor. His father and his grandfather, and also, he thought, his great-grandfather, had all been hakims. He himself had learnt the art from his father. He now had 30 to 35 patients a day—more when there was an epidemic—and he treated all free. Sadhaura was full of hakims: there were probably 20 to 25. Most of them were Seyyeds, and they earned from Rs.15 to 20 a month, the best of them from Rs.30 to 40 (the local doctor said the same). The hakim was less sought after than of old. This was partly because English medicines could be taken and applied without trouble, while most country medicines required much preparation and compounding. In addition to the hakims, there were ten or fifteen Muhammadans who dealt in Koranic spells and charms, and some even tried to cure children by blowing on them. There were also a few Brahmins who dealt in mantras. I inquired what he thought about pardah and health. He said that where grinding had been given up, it was no doubt difficult for women to get enough exercise, and this affected their digestion; but when they were not used to exercise, pardah did them no harm. His opinion was, perhaps, influenced by his regard for the system.

Unless he has some education, the cultivator goes first to the person who retails charms and mantras. These are written out and tied on to some part of the person. No charge is made (except by those who loot) unless the spell works, in which case a rupee is taken. If the charm fails, the next step is to go to the local hakim, who usually charges whatever the result. One of these happening to be in our train three days ago—he was the secretary of a society—I asked him how his business was faring. He said that it had been much less since a hospital had been opened in the neighbourhood. But this was largely because the doctor in charge of the hospital was skilful and treated his patients well. When this factor is absent the hakim is preferred; and it is only when he fails that the hospital is sought, and then it is usually too late. When a child is in pain, he is often taken to the mosque at the time of evening prayer, and the first person who comes out with, as it were, the name of God fresh on his lips is asked to blow upon him to cure his ailment. That is what the Rajput hakim was alluding to above. Even Hindus do this when there is a mosque in their village, in the belief that the child is suffering from somebody's evil eye and that this will put things right.

Country Remedies

[9 MILES]

December 23*rd.* SADHAURA *to* BARARA

The roads no longer deserve Wynyard's condemnation. The kachha road from Garhi to Naraingarh was as good as that from Mubarikpur to Garhi was bad, while to-day's was pukka with a soft border along which one could canter in comfort. There was the usual rush of lorries up and down, but there were also travellers proceeding like ourselves at a more old-fashioned pace. One of these was an orphan boy clad entirely in white, who was returning from a visit to a married sister living in a village 10 or 15 miles away. He had a badly enlarged spleen, but, possibly because there was no one

Wayfarers

to bother about him, he was doing nothing for it and had not so much as heard that there was a doctor at Sadhaura, though it is only 5 or 6 miles from his village. This was the more striking, as the doctor is popular.

A little farther on we came upon three tatterdemalions sitting with their packages by the roadside. They proved to be pedlars from Saharanpur, who earned their living—a matter of eight or nine rupees a month—by selling dyes and soap in the villages. They had just replenished depleted stores at Sadhaura, and talked of reaching Lahore and Multan with the help of the train and even of visiting Peshawar. They sell from door to door, mostly to women, and manage to make a living out of it, for women have no idea of prices.

A Bank and its President

Four miles from Barara we found a shamiana[1] erected by the roadside and about 100 villagers assembled, the representatives of two villages, one of them called Mullána, and including Rajputs (Hindu and Muhammadan), Jats, and Arains. They had come to show their banks and a Better Living society. The Mullana bank was a remarkable concern, with ninety-two members drawn from a dozen different castes, Rajputs, Arains, Sainis, Gosains, and Jogis; potters, washermen, weavers, water-carriers, oil-pressers, and barbers; and only one member was in debt to any one outside the society. They had deposits of Rs.6,000 and shares and reserves of nearly Rs.8,000. The president was as remarkable as the bank—an Arain with land which his family cultivates, while he carries on a piece-goods business in Mullana and edits a rural monthly. Yet he has studied only up to the ninth class. He has also started a library, and joining with seven or eight neighbours has engaged a young Arain widow with a smattering of education to teach the girls of his patti the Koran and how to read and write. 'She cannot marry, and we thought this would be good work for her.' She receives five rupees a month and at each harvest gets sixteen pounds of grain for each plough in the patti, whether people send their daughters to her or not. Thirty girls go to her daily.

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[1] A large open canopy.

Pardah

We had a very lively discussion about pardah. The Rajputs, both Hindu and Muhammadan, said it was still strong, but it was not quite so strict with Hindus, who allow their womenfolk to visit each other. When asked why Hindus keep pardah when there was no religious obligation to do so, the leading Hindu Rajput said it was due to their ancestors (*buzurgon ki bát*). A Muhammadan greybeard interjected: 'What would remain of the Rajputs if they gave up pardah? They would be just like every one else.' On which a younger Muhammadan commented: 'But if there were no pardah, we should have some one to bring us our roti instead of having to starve as we must now, and we should not have to bring back the wood on our heads.' To my surprise another greybeard supported him. But I was less surprised when I was informed that he was the treasurer of his bank, for there is nothing like a good village bank for broadening the rustic mind. The discussion which followed showed that there were two parties, which in itself is indicative of change. A Hindu Rajput pleader who came to see me later was much in favour of women coming out of pardah, for, now that grinding is given up, they can get no exercise. Also, they have to perform the offices of nature indoors, and this makes the houses unhealthy and insanitary.

Embroidery and Jewellery

There was a pretty bit of embroidery on the table before me. The Arain president said it was the work of his zenana, which had long done this kind of thing. Many had been taught the art by his mother, and on being married had carried it to other villages. Now that no grinding was done, and also less spinning, more girls came to learn and every day his sister taught ten or twelve. I got the same reply about jewellery as elsewhere—that it was much less worn than of old. What is the use, said more than one, of buying a lot of jewellery when sooner or later it will have to be sold and will then fetch much less?

Poultry I asked about poultry. Many now keep them, but only for domestic use. In Mullana the mullah kept them for sale. A year ago he had thirty, but one day he returned to find his house in ashes and all his hens dead. Undeterred, he is starting again and has got about a dozen. An Arain master also keeps them for sale and is able to pay his land revenue out of what he clears on his eggs. The eggs are sold at 4½ annas a dozen to a local dealer, who sells them at Ambala. Hindu Rajputs do not keep poultry—no doubt because they are almost entirely vegetarian. The Muhammadans of Mullana said they eat meat once a week, on Mondays, because this is their weekly fair day. The weekly fair is a regular institution of the neighbourhood, and four villages have them on different days. They were instituted by Gladstone, who was deputy commissioner of Ambala in the nineties; as one old fellow with a white beard said, 'when my first hairs began to turn grey.' Though so many years had passed, the older men present spoke with real affection of him, and said that he had got them to grow grass in their chos and that this had not only saved their lands but also brought them in income.[1] In Mullana only a few Arains grew vegetables, but in the other, Rajputs had started growing them five or six years ago. There was nothing derogatory in this, for they did not carry them on their heads to be sold retail in the bazaar, but sold them to vegetable sellers as standing crops.

The people praised the local doctor and said that he was in the hospital 'the whole day till evening', and if summoned would go out even at night—significant praise and too rarely heard. There were two country doctors in Mullana, a bania and an oilman; but neither had had much to do since this doctor came. Untouchability is strong amongst the older—they would still wash clothes which had been touched by a Chamar—but those who had the new light—an expression that I am constantly hearing on this tour—pay little attention to it, and there was no separation in the school.

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[1] Cf. p. 23.

As we sat talking I noticed a heavily laden bullock cart struggling to get through a slough of mud and water on the country road close by. It struggled for twenty minutes before it succeeded, and all for want of a day's work on the road by the villagers.

Propaganda

Amongst those assembled were two minstrels, one with a sarangi[1] and the other with a tabka,[2] a teacher with a harmonium, and two boy songsters, one with delicate fingers and a loud harsh voice, and the other rough and tubby with fingers to match but a voice like a bird. Before we left they sang us three songs, one in praise of the consolidation of holdings, and the other two in bitter reproach of the bania money-lender. One of the latter had a first-rate tune with a most infectious chorus, which was taken up with gusto by many of those present. 'O Bania-ji, O Bania-ji,' it ran, 'in the courts of God thy face shall be black!' It was sung so well that I had to pull myself together for the necessary protest. It was no part of co-operation, I said, to stir up hatred: it required unity and goodwill just as much as the soil needed sunshine and rain. The Assistant Registrar drove the point home so forcibly that they all began nodding their heads in assent.

We rode on to Barara, which is on the main line from Ambala to Lucknow. It is ten days since we last saw a railway.

[17 MILES]

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[1] A kind of guitar played with a bow.

[2] A drum.

IV. KARNAL

Untouchability—Religious Teaching—Women—Cattle

December 24th. BARARA *to* LADWA

To-day I entered the Karnal district: to Hindus, the Dharm Dharti or Holy Land, for it was on the field of Kurukshetra not far away that Shri Krishna delivered the immortal discourse of the Bhagvadgita; and to Muhammadans, the scene of great exploits, for thrice have their armies decided the fate of northern India on the field of Panipat. The Chor was still in sight, but the submontane country, through which I have been riding for the last ten days, was left behind, and I passed out on to the great alluvial plain which stretches northwards to the Jhelum, southwards to Delhi, and westwards to the sea 800 miles away. The jungle of dhák trees,[1] which must once have extended to the Beas—I came upon traces of it in Garshankar and Ambala—still holds its own here, and where there is no dhak, there are stretches of *sarkhanda* grass. The two together offer a perfect field to the cattle thief, who is almost more at home in this country than the cultivator. There is cultivation, but it is the cultivation of those who exist on sufferance—uncertain, scattered, primitive. Many fields we passed were half clogged with the dhak scrub and bush, and in one a hundred monkeys were taking their evening meal off the young wheat, which they literally gathered up in handfuls. Nature still has the upper hand, but man is setting himself to master her. The older fields were carefully fenced, and for the younger fields new fences were being made, the dhak itself being used for the purpose. There were not many wells, but where land could be irrigated, it was ridged into neat little plots. In one village, where a Khatri and some Jhiwars (Hindu water-carriers) divided the land, we found half an acre of healthy-looking potatoes. They had been introduced two years ago in imitation of the potatoes grown by some Sainis in a neighbouring village. 'They give us much profit, if there is no frost; but if there is, we get nothing.' In this village I noticed a fine old pipal tree and asked the Jhiwars whether they did puja to it. 'Yes, on fast-days.' 'And how? Do you tie a cord round?' 'No, we pour water round it.' They said, too, that on the first day of the month they gave their cattle flour; sometimes to one beast, sometimes to another. Never under any circumstances did they sell their cattle when they were old, or dry, or unfit for work.

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[1] *Butea frondosa.*

Untouchability

The farther south we go, the more Hindu becomes the atmosphere. One sign of this is the greater strictness about untouchability. We met a Hindu Jat and a Chamar of the same village coming along together, the one carrying iron for his implements, and the other salt. We fell into talk and were told that Chamars were not allowed to draw water from the village well, and as they had no well of their own, they depended on the good offices of a water-carrier or some friendly cultivator to draw water and pour it into their pitchers. What if they refused? 'If they did not show us this kindness (*parvarish*),' said the Chamar in earnest, humble tones, 'we should die of thirst.' He spoke as if the favour were entirely on the other side. He mentioned other restrictions. 'We must not enter a zemindar's house: we wait outside and call; and if no one comes, we come back when some one is there.' 'When the village meets together, do you sit on the cloth sheet with the others?' 'Never, never,' was the reply, and both tone and look suggested that this would be unheard-of presumption, 'we sit on the earth.' We asked if they might sit on a strip of gunny or cloth. 'No, we must sit on the earth, and on the earth alone.' Turning to the Jat, I asked him what he would do if he happened to touch the Chamar—would he sprinkle water over himself? 'No,' he replied, and he shook a deprecatory finger, 'I should wash my clothes and bathe.' A little later we met another Chamar, who confirmed all that the first had said. My staff say that this is characteristic not only of Karnal but also of Rohtak and Gurgaon.

Wayfarers We met many returning with their purchases from the weekly fair at Ladwa. These fairs, of which we heard yesterday, are a feature of the tract and, it seems, were introduced from the United Provinces. At one point the road, which for most of the way was little better than a rough farm-track, was blocked by two bullock carts piled high with two merry-go-rounds, which were being taken from fair to fair. The showmen had come from Jhajjar, 120 miles away, and were accompanied by their families, children and all. One sturdy old greybeard on foot was carrying a large pitcher containing five or six pounds of pulse (*mung*) and a dozen cobs of maize as a present to a widowed sister. He had set out at dawn and hoped to reach his sister's village, 25 miles away, before dusk. He had had nothing to eat on the way—it was two o'clock when we met him—and was as untired and as cheerful as if he had only just set out. Another wayfarer had on his head sixty pounds of wheat seed which he was hurrying home to sow: in a few days it would be too late. He had agreed to pay the bania just under eight rupees a maund for it, though the market rate was not more than Rs.6/8, and as he had no ready money, he had taken it as a cash loan at 25 per cent.

Most of those we met were loaded in one way or another. One party was taking home the rezais or quilts which they had taken into Ladwa to be stuffed. Others—Chamars—were carrying skins, which they would turn into shoes—'We make but two annas profit a pair.' One had a half-filled bottle. He had been to consult a hakím in Ladwa, and from some mysterious place in the folds of his garments pulled out a tiny slip of paper, the hakim's prescription. His companion had also been suffering, but had gone to the local doctor. We were amongst much poorer folk than those one meets on a high road. Yet in most of the villages through which we passed we found that women were giving up spinning. In one there was a small colony of weavers (fifteen or sixteen houses), who complained of the times: in the last two years prices had fallen, and their trade had greatly declined, so much so that two families had given up weaving and taken to cultivation.

Near Ladwa, we noticed in a Jat village a pukka house which was evidently new. It proved to be the chowpal or village meeting-place and had cost Rs. 1,500. This had been raised by a poll tax of ten rupees on every male in the village—a good instance of co-operation and self-taxation. But this co-operation of villager with villager did not extend to repairing the road, which 100 yards from the village was almost impassable with mud and water. The villagers protested that it was entered in the map as Government property and that it was for Government to repair it. It is rare for villages to repair their own roads. Yet costly chowpals are constantly being built in order that villages may not be put to shame when relatives or marriage parties visit them.

[16 MILES]

Christmas Day.—Halt.

In the morning we had four pleasant but quite unfruitful hours after partridge. We tried to get some village boys to beat for us, but they said: 'We are afraid of our parents: they do not like things to be killed.' A good deal of new land was being brought under cultivation and fenced. But we saw monkeys at their fell work again.

A few days ago my cook approached me on the subject of dinner for the 'Bara Din'.[1] Should he not get

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[1] Christmas.

'a battak—a chhota[1] geese'? I replied austerely that a murghi (chicken) would do. 'But', said the cook in deferential protest, 'the Huzoor has had that many times.' 'A true word, Imam Din, but when one is alone, there can be no Bara Din; but if it pleases you, let there be a chhota geese.' Wishing not to break off my tour before reaching Karnal, I had resisted the temptation of a more sociable Christmas. Actually, however, there was no need for the 'chhota geese', for a most hospitable couple, who happen to be in this rest-house, insisted upon my partaking with them of the time-honoured fare.

December 26th. LADWA *to* INDRI

Religious Teaching

As it was a holiday we made a leisurely start at 10.30 and did not get in till 4. The way lay through more settled country; villages were again within sight of each other, and man seemed to have regained the upper hand over nature. We stopped at a village to meet the twenty-six representatives of two village banks. All but one were followers of the order of Udásis,[2] but when I asked them whether they were Hindus or Sikhs, they were puzzled how to reply and after much hesitation said they were Sikhs. This arose out of some questions I put to them about religious teaching. A hot altercation followed between the followers of the Udasis and the other member, who was a middle-aged rough-mannered fellow. The surly old dog was so much upset by what the others said to him that at one point he disappeared completely under his chaddar and only emerged to growl bitterly at them. One of the two villages has no temple of any kind; the other has a Gurdwára[3] with a Granthi or Sikh priest but no Granth Sahib.[4] Once or twice a year the Granthi goes to Ladwa and borrows one and reads it aloud for 'eight or ten days' to the villagers, and this is all the religious teaching they get. None of them can read or write—the Sub-Inspector has to act as secretary to both banks—and I do not suppose that the Granthi is much of a scholar. Apart from his occasional readings of the Granth Sahib, he blows the conch (*sank*) every evening and, if there is a traveller to entertain, gives him his roti. For these offices he receives, twice a year, ten pounds of grain for each plough in use in the village. A zaildar who joined me a little later said that there were twelve or fifteen temple priests (*pujáris*) in his circle, and that all they did was to tinkle the temple bell and blow the conch. 'Thus, the people have peace (*arám*): and the priests, too, have peace, for they get their roti.' Yet, though there is little teaching, the villager will spend money on his religion. Two miles from Ladwa is a village where the sixty or seventy families of Muhammadan Rajputs have combined together to build a mosque at a cost of Rs.3,500. Every family contributed at least Rs.50, and more than half borrowed for the purpose.

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[1] Small.

[2] 'The principal religious order of the Sikhs' (Rose, *op. cit.*, iii. 479); revered also by many Hindus.

[3] Sikh temple.

[4] The Sikh Bible.

Cattle Breeding

On the subject of cattle, feeling is everywhere strong. These peasants said that if any one were to sell an old cow or bullock, or even an old buffalo, he would be expelled 'from the bosom of the Jats' (*Jaton ki baghl se*) and fined Rs.25. Such a thing had never happened in their memory. The zaildar, a fine old man with a burnt complexion and a spotless white chaddar, said that some selling used to be done, but not since it was realized why their cattle were bought. They did not object, however, to castration now that 'the new instrument had come'. That was two or three years ago. 'Before that there was a great pain to the cattle, as Muhammadans used to crush: then we would have none of it.' And rightly, for this pounding method was most cruel. It was employed as an alternative to cutting to avoid the shedding of blood, to which many Hindus objected. The 'new instrument', which is called the Burdizzo castrator, has solved the problem to every one's satisfaction, for it renders sterile without cutting the skin or shedding blood. To encourage cattle breeding, a bull from the Government stud farm at Hissar has been presented to the neighbourhood by the district board. It is popular, but unaided it has to serve both villages, which are said to contain 300 cows!

Women's Work The women in these two villages do no work in the fields beyond picking the cotton and taking the men their roti. They do not even draw water if there is a water-carrier to do it for them, nor do they chop the fodder; but they make dung-cakes and sweep out their houses. This is in strange contrast to the Jat women of Rohtak, who work harder than any other women in the Punjab. It is probably due to the fact that this tahsil (Thanesar) marches with Ambala and is under the influence of the pardah-nishin Rajputs, just as the Karnal tahsil is affected by its proximity to Rohtak. A zaildar of the Karnal tahsil told me to-day that in his circle the women did more field-work than round here, and this was because marriage had brought amongst them women from the direction of Rohtak who had a higher standard of work.

To return to these two villages, the women do nothing outside the ordinary routine to make up for the little work done out of doors. A few do a little embroidery, but none make webbing for the beds: string is used instead, and that is made by the men. Most, however, grind and spin. How long does the grinding take for a family of five? 'One hour,' said the non-Udasi, at which all the others laughed derisively. 'A full three hours,' they asserted. The zaildar said that both grinding and spinning were declining, and that in a few houses sewing was taking their place. When grinding has to be done, women must be up at 4.30 or at latest by 5. But if there is no grinding, they need not get up till 6 or 6.30 when the churning has to be done.

Clothes One can understand that many find it simpler, as well as cheaper, to buy instead of making their own clothes. To make them, the cotton has to be both ginned and carded before it is spun. The ginning is done at home on a hand-ginning press which costs about a rupee, but the carding is done by the oilman. When spun the yarn has to be handed over to the weaver to be woven into cloth, and from the weaver it has to be taken to the washerman to be cleaned, and finally to the tailor to be cut up and sewn into whatever is required. There are, therefore, six different processes before the homespun is ready to be worn. The dhotis and puggarees of all who were present were mill-made, but in nearly every case shirt (*kurta*) and chaddar were homespun. I suggested to them Mr. Gandhi's idea that men as well as women should spin. Unlike those I have asked elsewhere, they did not scout the idea but said there would first have to be a change of custom, for men have never spun.

Houses

More important now than either food or clothes are houses, for people are beginning to realize that a good house means a longer life. We went into the village to have a look at the houses of the Jats. In front of several were little piles of rubbish brushed together by the housewives and waiting to be removed by the sweepers. This is not due to any order from above but to old practice. For this work every sweeper gets one chapati a day, as well as harvest dues, from every house he serves. The walls of the houses were well plastered—the replastering is done every year after the spring harvest—and were in marked contrast to those of the Ambala Rajputs. We examined the house of a twenty-acre Jat and found it remarkably clean, except where the cattle lived. These were stalled in the same compound, virtually in the same house, odd rooms being used as stalls for want of space. One of them was approached through the kitchen—half room, half verandah—and through a bedroom. It had only one small aperture for light and air, and this was in the roof, which looked as if it had been bashed in with a brick. The floor was as uneven as a bad cobbled road and fouled with urine and dung. The chief living-room, which was also a bedroom, had one small window, shuttered and blocked with a guest's saddle, and a tiny hole in the roof, made not for ventilation but for passing the grain through after it had been dried up above. Similar arrangements may be seen in peasants' cottages in Austria and France. Though the ventilation was primitive, the room had a certain character, as the well-laid shisham[1] rafters were supported by a fine central pillar simply carved and stained black. Two inner rooms contained bins (*barole*) made of dried mud, one with a capacity of 25 maunds or nearly a ton. There was also a basket of vast proportions. A good many simple possessions were scattered about, mostly made in the village. The most costly were a spinning-wheel, which was lying in the little courtyard, and a well-stuffed yellow quilt (*rezai*), each valued at five rupees. The large room also contained a highly adorned huqqa with a brass stand valued at Rs.3/4—an ordinary huqqa costs only eight annas—grindstones (Rs.2/8 to Rs.3), a string bed (Rs.2/8), a hand-ginning press (Re.1), a low four-legged stool (eight annas), and a well-woven straw mat.

A new House

There was one pukka house in the village. This we also examined to see what improvements modern taste demands. It belonged to four Jat brothers who all lived together, and had been built by their father ten or twelve years ago for Rs.3,000—apparently out of the profits of his 25 to 30 acres. Outside, it looked superior enough, but inside, it was not one whit better than the first house. Indeed, it was dirtier and, if possible, darker. On entering the tiny courtyard, we found one of the brothers, a dour burly Hindu Jat with a formidable chin, weighing out the monthly allowance of grain for one of his Chamar labourers. He looked at us suspiciously and at first would hardly answer a question.

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[1] *Dalbergia sissu.*

Eventually, however, he let us see the whole house in the fullest freedom. The biggest room had a fine wooden chest (*kothi*) valued at Rs.40, which had been made for a bride's trousseau and given as part of her dowry. The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century châteaux on the Loire have many such, far more beautiful in design and adornment, but made for the same purpose. At one end of this room five thickly cobwebbed rafters were giving way and had had to be supported by a shisham log, which was itself on the point of collapsing. This room led into a side-room, which was in complete darkness except for such light as struggled through a small hole in the roof. At one end were two beds—for one of the brothers and his wife—and at the other, several maunds of lime which had been lying there for two years. The best feature of this expensive whited sepulchre was an airy room upstairs, which however is only used during the rains. The other redeeming point was that the cattle-stalls were separate and just across the lane. Here, reclining on a string bed, I found a Sikh reading the old tale of Hir and Ranjha—a most rare sight to see a book in use in a village. The Sikh had had very little teaching—not beyond the fourth primary—but had done some soldiering. Amongst the many possessions in the house was a light basket sieve, through which the grain is passed in order to obtain the best grain for seed. The larger grains which will not go through are used for seed, the rest for food. Those with me said they had never seen this before. A small point, but indicating an attention to detail, which is not common in the village and which has probably had something to do with the prosperity of the family. Further indications of this were a field of potatoes, which were being tried for the first time, and the beginnings of a garden in which seven mango seedlings had been planted.

A few more points may be noted about this village. No one keeps poultry, as all are strict vegetarians and do not even eat eggs. They eschew meat, not because it is forbidden, but of their own free will (*khushi se*). They buy their vegetables from the Jhiwars who hawk them. They are heavily in debt and spend on the average Rs.400–500 on the marriage of a girl and Rs.600–700 on the marriage of a boy. The jewellery is given by the bridegroom's father. A few take a price for their girls, but not many. As regards untouchables, their behaviour is exactly like that described two days ago, and the zaildar says that this attitude is common to the tract.

Trees are plentiful, and for the most part dung-cakes are used mainly for simmering the milk. In contrast to the central Punjab, they are stacked with great care and thatched with elephant grass to protect them from the rain. At present the people are eating maize, which taken with the leaves of rape (*sarson*) or gram is most appetizing. Ság, as these leaves are called, is generally available from November to February; but this year, owing to the prolonged drought, which was only broken by the heavy rain at the end of last month, there is general scarcity. The cattle are the worst sufferers, and approaching Indri we passed bullock carts laden with the fronds of date palms, which were being carried home to be chopped up and given to them mixed with wheat straw. We are now only a few miles from the Jumna, and Indri once had a fort to guard a ford across it.

[12 MILES]

December 27*th*. INDRI *to* RAMBA

Rohtak District

Our road to-day lay along the canal bank. We had much talk about the neighbouring district of Rohtak, as we had with us one who knew Rohtak well. It is a great soldiering district, and after the war, when all soldiers had more money than they knew what to do with, many took to money-lending; but now that money is scarce there are fewer who do this. The agriculturist money-lender is worse than the professional, as he goes about his business 'with a stick' and, as soon as he can, gets hold of his client's land. The normal rate for the peasant proprietor is 25 per cent, which is what it has always been. This is higher than in the central Punjab, where it is 18¾ per cent (*paisa rupya*).

Women

As to women, marriage before puberty is much less common than it was. The main reason for this is 'the new light' which the close connexion with the army has diffused more widely than in Karnal, where comparatively few enlist. Another reason is said to be the growing feeling of security. Only the other day the same reason was given for pardah no longer being necessary.[1] Village girls are usually married at puberty; boys at sixteen to eighteen. Consummation takes place in the first or third year after marriage, never in the second, because it is inauspicious. People are beginning to realize that later marriage means better health. Polygamy is rare, and it is commonly said: 'If you want to give a man trouble, give him a second wife.' A woman's life in Rohtak is not an easy one. The Rajputs keep their women in pardah, and the Jats work theirs harder than any one else in the Punjab. They have to work harder than the men, to the neglect of their children, and one who knows the district well says this is less an indication of industry than of slavery, for the men beat them if they do not work hard enough. They have to be up before five to do the grinding, and as they do not go to bed till ten, they get too little sleep. All that can be said for so severe a régime is that it keeps them out of mischief. The popular view in this country is that a woman should have little or no leisure to think, for fear of what may enter her mind. The story is told of a young widow who on the death of her husband went to see a holy man called Jallan, and begged a blessing of him that she might pass her widowhood as a widow should. And this was the advice that Jallan gave her. 'Let there be a wall behind you and a spinning-wheel in front: busy yourself with grinding and spinning, and you will pass your days well. But if you wear silk and eat sugar and ghi, what can the prayers of Jallan do for you?' So it comes that amongst the old-fashioned the grinding of flour is looked upon as a virtuous act, and even the drawing of water and the cleansing of the family vessels are regarded as services of social value. And the decline of grinding is regretted, not so much on account of its economic bearing as because it weakens a wholesome check upon the stronger feelings. Fatigue, it is said, is woman's best guardian angel. 'When you have not enough work at home to give to a woman, mix rice with pulse and let her separate the one from the other' was an old man's advice to a member of my staff; for, said he, 'a vacuum in a woman's mind is sure to create a hurricane of evil passion.' If the peasant woman could be converted from a chattel into a civilized being, it would be possible to prescribe a less rigorous treatment. But meanwhile the view of these wiseacres deserves to be noted.

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[1] See p. 76.

Cattle In the matter of cattle Rohtak is even stricter than Karnal. Recently a Hindu peasant sold a cow to a butcher. The news spread like wildfire, and the cow was rescued by the men of a neighbouring village, and the offender boycotted till he paid a fine of Rs.25 to the village funds. But in both districts an appreciable number sell their cattle on the sly, often exchanging useless beasts for good and paying the difference in cash. This, however, has little effect on the cattle as a whole, and cattle-breeding, which is of the greatest importance to Rohtak—before the war three tahsils derived a profit of over fifteen lakhs from their live-stock[1]—is carried on under such deplorable conditions that, according to the late Live Stock Expert to the Punjab Government, 50 per cent of the cattle are 'rubbish'.[2] The chief reason for this is promiscuous grazing on wholly inadequate pastures. 'Cattle and enclosures', wrote Arthur Young, 'are synonymous terms.'[1] Without enclosures good and bad stock breed promiscuously, and, as with money under Gresham's law, the bad stock drives out the good. The evil can be partially mitigated by castrating the inferior stock, and this is now being freely done, though ten or fifteen years ago it was looked upon by many Hindus as a sin. But this does not get rid of the difficulty of inadequate grazing. Everywhere grazing is entirely uncontrolled, and a good bullock or cow has no more chance than a bad of obtaining sufficient grass. Permanent pasture lands in the western sense do not exist, and any one in a village can graze as many cattle as he pleases on the village pastures. This sets a premium upon quantity rather than quality, and few stop to consider how many of their cattle are worth retaining. The simple principle imposed by religion that an animal once born must be allowed to live on irrespective of its utility to man outweighs all economic considerations. The result, says the Live Stock Expert, is that 'no sort of effort is ever made to limit the stock on any common pasture to the number that pasture is capable of carrying',[2] and he adds that in tracts dependent upon rain cattle 'for all practical purposes . . . get no green fodder at all, except for a month or two in the rains'.[3] Some may ask—why not try stall feeding? The difficulty is the high cost of fodder in relation to the value of the cattle. The Live Stock Expert believes that any one who tried cattle breeding on those lines would 'be ruined in no time',[4] for he estimates that in the course of their rearing most of the four-year-old bullocks sold in the cattle fairs of Rohtak and Hissar—the latter is the great cattle breeding district of the south-eastern Punjab—'have eaten fodder . . . to a greater value than the average amount realized for them when sold'.[5] It would seem better, therefore, to try to eliminate the 50 per cent rubbish, and if this could be done, there would be twice as much fodder for the remainder. The importance of all this extends far beyond the Punjab, for, says the Linlithgow Commission, 'in nearly every part of India the common grazing lands and all grass-lands close to villages are hopelessly overstocked';[1] and a leading statistician calculates that there are twenty-five million superfluous cattle in the country, and that the annual economic loss is 'more than four times' the land revenue.[2]

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[1] See the Assessment Reports of Rohtak (p. 18), Jhajjar (pp. 21–2), and Sampla (p. 10).

[2] Linlithgow Commission, viii. 121.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

[2] Linlithgow Commission, viii. 118.

[3] *Ibid.*, viii. 119.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Panchayets and Politics

If in regard to cattle Rohtak is stricter than Karnal, it is partly because in Rohtak the caste panchayet is still a factor in village life. With the spread of individualism it is much less strong than it was, but in many villages it is still the custom for the members of the same community to meet together and settle common concerns. There is no formal 'panch' or committee of elders, but decisions are taken by general assent, and in difficult or important matters the truth will sometimes be ascertained by making a person depose with Ganges water in his hand. Neither in Rohtak nor in Karnal is there any communalism in the village; but there is much faction, which usually turns on personal issues. No cultivator here cares a jot for politics, and the form of Government under which he lives is a matter of complete indifference to him, provided he is left to gain his living (*guzára*) in peace. 'It is a singular fact', wrote Sleeman nearly a hundred years ago, 'that the peasantry . . . have never been the friends of any existing government—have never considered their interests and that of their government the same; and, consequently, have never felt any desire for its success or duration.' Government here is still something quite outside the peasant's life and represents a force which, like nature, is sometimes beneficent and sometimes maleficent, but which must always be propitiated.[1] No general interest is taken in the Simon Commission: in the villages of Karnal, it has not even been heard of, and in Rohtak, only the few who have some education realize its existence.

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[1] *The Report,* ch. vii, recommendation 9.

[2] G. Findlay Shirras in *The Indian Journal of Economics,* October 1928, p .120.

Landlords

In neither district would it be possible to find any work of public utility that owes its existence to a landlord, and there is hardly a landlord of any importance who does anything for the good of either land or tenants. On this tour I have frequently asked who were the good landlords of the tahsil or district we were passing through and have generally been given in reply a list of the big men, both good and bad. The reason for this is that the ordinary word for 'good' in Hindustani—*achcha*—has no moral significance, but only material. A gazetted officer with me yesterday had, indeed, to confess that the word 'good', if applied to a landlord in the moral sense, was untranslatable—a fact which is sufficiently suggestive.

[8 MILES]

December 28th. A day's halt.

Cattle

Accompanied by a zaildar clad in a gay Italian woollen blanket, we walked across the fields before breakfast to see the three societies that have been started in Ramba, a large village or kasba of 2,800 inhabitants. The cattle were on the point of going out to their grazing and were in the charge of a number of small boys, each of whom looked after the cattle of several families. I noticed the familiar sign of cattle disease—a potsherd suspended by a string across the entrance to the village. 'Yes,' said the president of one of the societies, 'the cattle are ill and the vet came here yesterday and inoculated 190 head. He brought twenty bottles of serum and took back twelve because many refused to have their cattle done. "It is God's will that they are ill," they said.' Those who can read and write prefer to go to the vet, but the others think it wisest to have the name of God written on a potsherd and hung across the lane. Being Muhammadans, they see no harm in selling their cattle, and many Hindus give away their old cattle without asking what will happen to them. Jats do this, but not Brahmins. Said a Muhammadan Rajput: 'God made cattle for the benefit of His creatures, and when they can do no work, there is no advantage in keeping them.' The people have a little more faith in science for themselves than for their cattle. Plague visited the village three times, and no one was inoculated; but when it came a fourth time (three years ago), the president of one of the societies had himself and his family done, and many followed his example, so that on that occasion few died. This is not the first case I have come across on this tour of a co-operator taking the lead. Co-operators who lead, lead indeed.

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[1] Compare the Russian peasant: 'To imagine that any good could come out of a Government was altogether outside his horizon' (A. Wicksteed, *Life under the Soviets*, 1928, p. 191).

Chowpals

On entering the village, we found the lanes littered with rubbish, and as it was blowing great guns (a gale from the south) we swallowed I know not what as we walked about and were almost blinded by the dust and rubbish. The village is full of pukka houses belonging to Rajputs, but, as often happens with Rajputs, many of them had large cracks and rents in the walls. There are no less than twenty-two chowpals or meeting-places. All but six are pukka, and all but four owned jointly by a patti[1] or thola[1] of the village. We inspected two and found the interior of both in a lamentable state, the plaster coming off the walls, the well-timbered ceilings blackened with the smoke of the evening huqqa, and the floor strewn with fodder and, in one case, with cement. A sad pity, as there has evidently been some mason in the village with the makings of an architect. One chowpal in particular, and it was the dirtier of the two, had character, if not beauty. The newest chowpal had cost Rs.700, but would have cost double had not both timber and labour been supplied free.

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[1] A section of the village.

Mullahs and Mosques

One of the first buildings we saw on entering the village was a mosque with a corrugated iron verandah, which had recently been added at a cost of Rs.100. The mullah in charge had come from Bijnor in the United Provinces. The connexion with this distant place was due to a pious Sheikh from Ramba having settled there fifty years ago. Though the mullah had come so far, he could do no more than read the Koran in Arabic, and the same applied to the mullahs of the other five mosques. One of these was 'háfiz'; that is to say, he knew the whole Koran by heart; but there was no one in the village who could interpret it to the people. The girls were naturally no better off and had to be content with having the Koran read out to them in Arabic by the two or three women who could do this. The mullah from Bijnor was married—mullahs need not be celibates—and for the support of himself and his family received about thirty maunds [1] of grain a year from those who used his mosque, also daily meals from each of his parishioners in turn. A new mosque and Idgah [2] had recently been built through the munificence of a Rajput, who for twenty years had been shopkeeping in the Transvaal. He was the only Rajput out of 250 families to have gone abroad. He had also repaired the shrine of the local saint (Hazrat Shah Jamál) and surrounded it with a wide well-laid pavement. In all he had spent Rs.16,000—a good example of a man sharing his wealth with his neighbours.

Pirs and Pujaris

Six or seven pirs have followers in Ramba. The zaildar said that his usually came with fifteen or twenty followers, all of whom had to be fed twice, in addition to which a present had to be made to the pir himself. The amount of this depended upon a man's position

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[1] A little over a ton.

[2] The place where the prayers are said on the conclusion of the fast of Ramzan.

(*haisyat*): he himself gave five rupees. The Mahájans,[1] of whom there are a good number in the village, have secured for their temple a pujári who can both read and explain the Shastras and the Ramayan. This he does from time to time in open assemblage. They have also got the district board to open a girls' school—now attended by thirty girls, none of them, however, a Rajput.

Pardah, Marriage, and Midwives

This brought us to the pardah question. About a hundred of us, mostly Muhammadans, were now sitting pretty tightly packed in one of the many chowpals out of the wind, dust, and rubbish. They had heard of the Amir's order, but for them pardah was a matter of religion and could not be changed. All were of one mind on the subject, including even the very intelligent president of the arbitration society. In the adjoining Kaithal tahsil pardah is less strictly observed by the Rajputs, but here it is maintained with old-fashioned rigour, and women never go out on foot. Not many spin, partly because very little cotton can be grown, partly because it does not pay; and even fewer grind, as there is an oil engine for the purpose. Some do a little plain sewing, and amongst the Mahajans the girls' school is bringing in more elaborate forms of needlework. Both Rajput and Mahajan—seven or eight of the latter were present—agreed that in the last ten years the age of marriage had gone up. Before this, girls were constantly married when quite small; but many became widows before they grew up, and as they could not marry again, it was an evil. Now girls are not usually married before puberty, and amongst Rajputs 15 or 16 is the usual age for girls, and 18 or 20 for boys. An inquiry about midwives produced the usual reply. There are four for the whole village—a Pathan, a Jogi, a fakir, and the inevitable sweeperess. It was admitted that they often came to their work in dirty clothes and were entirely untrained, and that women and children not infrequently died under their ministrations. They get a fee of one rupee for a boy and eight annas for a girl. Two hundred and fifty-two Rajputs have joined a Better Living society, and a boy's marriage, which used to cost a family Rs.500, can now be done for Rs.70, and a girl's marriage, which cost Rs.800, for Rs.300. The number of guests that may accompany the bridegroom to the house of the bride is fixed, and the old custom of displaying the bride's presents is stopped: the presents are put into a coffer, and the coffer is padlocked and handed over—*bas*.[1] People may put in as much or as little as they please. The amount spent on jewellery varies from Rs.150 to Rs.300. Unlike practice in Ambala and Hoshiarpur, jewellery is worn as much as ever.

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[1] A caste of shopkeepers and money-lenders.

Education

This part of the world is educationally much less advanced than the area so far traversed. A sign of this is that in the whole village, which is almost a townlet, only one person—a Mahajan—has so far gained a degree, and only one has passed the entrance: two more have failed. Compare with this the rather smaller Rajput village in Garshankar already mentioned,[2] which has four B.A.s and thirty-five matriculates. The one matriculate was present. He is a Rajput and having failed to secure service (*mulázimat*) is sitting idle at home. 'He cannot cultivate,' said a greybeard; 'he has not the strength.'

Money-lending

I asked the Mahajans about their money-lending. 'It is very difficult nowadays to get anything back from the zemindars.' 'Why do you lend to them?' 'They compel us.' This brief reply proved a veritable apple of discord. Both sides had much to say on the subject. The Mahajans protested that their accounts were exact, regular, and open to inspection, and they would have no objection to giving their clients a six-monthly account. 'They enter our repayments on slips,' said an indignant peasant, 'and put down what they like in their books.' Asked what a money-lender made on the average over a period of five years, the spokesman of the Mahajans said—15 per cent. Asked further why they did not save themselves all trouble and deposit their money with a co-operative society, he replied (like the Ambala money-lender) that the People's Bank had failed: also they only recovered enough to live on. He added that their recoveries were as much in grain as in cash and included a lot of cattle.

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[1] Enough.

[2] p. 43.

Money-lending in Karnal is a difficult business owing to the uncertainties of the harvests and the want of character in the people. Lazy, dirty, thriftless, greatly addicted to cattle-thieving and a prey to malaria, they have been demoralized by disease and war. Since Mahmud of Ghazni sacked Thanesar in 1014, invader after invader has passed this way, and the district might almost be described as the Belgium of northern India. The ravages of war have ceased, but those of disease remain and sap all energy. The virile enterprising spirit of the central Punjab is lacking, and the money-lender is more at home than the co-operative society. The cultivator with his wretched manner of farming and living has little to spare, and that little the society cannot easily get. Nor is it easy for the money-lender; but working only for himself and depending for his living on his success, he is naturally more energetic and persistent than the committee of a society. When the grain is being threshed, he dogs the cultivator on the threshing-floor and plays upon his fear of court and jail. Able to recover more, he can advance more than the society; and as the lazy and thriftless will always go to those who advance most, he is sure of the custom of the majority and makes a living where a good society can hardly exist. Had the cultivator more character, the position would be different, for character and sound finance are inseparably allied. As it is, co-operation has an uphill task and many members of village banks—

one Sub-Inspector said 50 per cent—deal, to their obvious hurt, with both money-lender and bank.

Arbitration Societies

One of the things for which a good village bank must always hesitate to advance and for which the money-lender advances readily enough is litigation,[1] in the Punjab a greater curse than drink. Every year about 250,000 suits are filed, and over half are valued at less than Rs.100 each, and about 70,000 at less than Rs.50 (£3 15*s*.).[2] The waste of time and money entailed by this—one remembers the three litigants met near Rupar [3]—is obvious. Less obvious, but not less serious, is the atmosphere of animosity, corruption, and perjury, which infects most of those who frequent the district courts to the darkening of justice and demoralization of character. In his own village and amongst his own people the peasant is as likely to tell the truth as he is certain to do the reverse in court. The facts of any simple case can therefore be easily ascertained, and if no complicated questions of law are involved, justice can be more swiftly and surely done. These considerations have led to the starting of about fifty co-operative arbitration societies in the Punjab to settle disputes on the spot.[4] One of these is in Ramba, and, following usual lines, is constituted thus. Every member on admission signs an agreement that if he refuses to let the society settle a dispute which he may have with another member on any of the subjects specified in the by-laws—these subjects vary from society to society—or if in any way he obstructs the execution of an award, he will be prepared to pay as much as Rs.100 by way of penalty, subject to an appeal to the general meeting of members or to the Registrar. When a dispute arises, the plaintiff applies to the committee, which fixes a date for the hearing of the case and summons the defendant to be present accordingly. On the date named the committee does its best to settle the matter amicably. If it fails, the parties are required to refer the dispute to a single arbitrator or to a board of three, one of whom is nominated by the committee to act as president of the board. The arbitrators are selected from a panel of not less than five or more than twelve members, appointed once a year at a general meeting at which at least half the members of the society are present. On a fixed date they hear the evidence and in due course give their award. An appeal lies (at the option of the appellant) to the committee or the Registrar. If there is any difficulty in enforcing the award, the successful party may apply to the local court to have it confirmed. If either party objects to confirmation, the court will consider arguments against the justice of the award but will not re-hear the evidence. If a defendant fails to appear when summoned by the committee or the arbitrators, the plaintiff has no alternative but to go to court in the usual way. But the defendant renders himself liable to a fine of Rs.100, which can be recovered like any other sum due to the society. To obviate possible attempts to make the worse appear the better reason, no legal practitioner may appear on behalf of a party. Nor may one be appointed arbitrator or a member of the committee; but one may be employed as a commissioner on stated questions of law, and in certain cases on questions of fact. Thus, though the ordinary processes of law are by no means entirely excluded, the advantage to the villager is great; for all the best forces of the village are mobilized to secure, if possible an amicable, and in any case a just, prompt, and inexpensive settlement of any dispute that arises, and to save the parties from the corrupting atmosphere of the courts.

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[1] On this subject see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[2] For the three years ending 1927 the average number of suits filed each year was 244,727, and the number valued at less than Rs.100 and Rs.50 respectively was 127,864 and 69,696.

[3] p. 47.

[4] For the history of these societies see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 276.

One of these societies has been formed in Ramba and is doing well. When it was started, the Rajputs asked the Mahájans to join it, but they replied: 'What has it to do with us? Arrange it for yourselves.' Later on, seeing that disputes were settled and that all the trouble and expense of going to the courts were saved, sixteen of them joined too; and though this was only last June, the society has already settled fifteen disputes in which they were concerned. In twelve of these a Rajput was the defendant, and though they related to money-lending, they have all been settled by the committee without reference to arbitration. In every case the Mahajan gave up part of his claim. Considering the feeling just shown about money-lending, it was surprising to find that in joining the society the Mahajans did not stipulate that they should be represented on either the committee or the panel of arbitrators. One of them asked to-day, but in no tone of demand, that this should be rectified, and the request was so patently just that it was accepted at once.

Three small points may be mentioned before we leave the village. Though it contains 2,800 inhabitants, no one grows vegetables; sweepers alone keep poultry; and the only work done by the peasant at home is to make string out of hemp for his beds.

December 29*th*. RAMBA *to* KARNAL

There is not much to chronicle—some partridge before breakfast, and some talk on the road before tea. We met a good-looking middle-aged Jat wearing a gold necklace and comfortably seated in a country carriage (*bheli*), which was proceeding at a gentle trot. He had left this morning at dawn and had already done 25 miles. He was on his way to fetch his wife home and had hired his bania's carriage for the double journey for five rupees. He had still four or five miles to go. He was in debt to his bania, but had no idea to what extent, nor what rate of interest he paid: his elder brother saw to that. We also met men bringing home bundles of pipal twigs for their cattle, a sign that fodder is scarce.

Indigenous Co-operation An interesting form of indigenous co-operation much prevalent in this district is the system of cultivation called lána. Two peasants or more—sometimes even as many as ten—join together for a year to cultivate a given area. The produce is divided after each harvest in proportion to the amount of labour and bullock power supplied by each partner. Though these partnerships are formed for a year only, they are often renewed year after year. Most of the forms of indigenous co-operation already mentioned are common in the district. Drinking wells are repaired jointly; watchmen are maintained to protect the crops from monkeys, pigs, and straying cattle; relatives and neighbours help each other at sowing and harvest time, following the ábat system,[1] here called 'mang'; and a dhurry or two are kept for wedding parties; sometimes also plates, but not always, for in the village we visited three days ago the leaves of the dhak tree were used instead.

I entered Karnal at sundown, having ridden 278 miles from Gurdaspur. My mare has borne me much better than I expected, and on joining the Grand Trunk road we sped along its soft border at a good pace. It is my twenty-seventh day out: I have halted four days, and have touched the railway at only five places, three of which were railheads.

[8 MILES]

December 30th. KARNAL

Untouchability After breakfast we rode out four miles to see a bank of Hindu Jats. We inspected it sitting under a neem tree in front of the village chowpal, a large pukka building of pleasant design, but as dirty as those at Ramba. Seeing a pipal tree, I asked whether it was still worshipped. The older inhabitants pour an occasional libation to it; but, as this was said, every one laughed good-humouredly as at some old-fashioned eccentricity. There is change, too, in regard to the Chamars. Seven of them are members of the bank and, as usual, were sitting at a distance behind every one else; but they are no longer regarded as untouchables, for in the last year or two they have given up eating the flesh of animals that have died. There is no sprinkling of the person and no washing of clothes after chance contacts, nor are their children made to sit apart in the village school. '*We* wash after several days,' said a magnanimous Jat; '*they* wash every day.' They have no temple of their own, but are served by a Khatri sadhu who lives a few miles away.

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[1] See p. 17.

Religious Teaching

The village, which has about 100 houses, is virtually without religious teaching of any kind. There are three temples, but no temple priest lives in the village, for he would not earn enough to live on. The villagers depend for their spiritual ministrations upon the visits of itinerant pujaris. There are, however, four resident prohits or family priests, one of whom cultivates and does a little doctoring as well. At every wedding or funeral the prohit who performs the ceremony gets from five to ten rupees, and at every harvest receives from each family he serves a pound for every maund[1] of produce. Very occasionally a pandit visits the village and reads aloud the Ramayan and the Bhagvadgita, but he has not been round for three years. The girls get no religious teaching at all.

Doctors and Midwives

The interest of the village is that it illustrates the influence that a town like Karnal, which has about 23,000 inhabitants, exercises upon its neighbourhood. Thus, people go freely to the hospital in Karnal, where there is a good doctor, and they prefer him to the hakim, because the latter charges. 'The doctor is free, so we run to him quickly.' Formerly they depended upon spells, and when any one had fever they would fill twenty earthenware bowls (*handi*) with grain to propitiate their ancestors, in case they had sent the fever because they were hungry. These are now things of the past, but the old cruel system of untrained midwives persists. There are two in the village, one the wife of an oilman and the other of a sweeper. Are they any good? 'All they do is to seize the child by the neck.' For this they get one rupee for a girl and a little more for a boy, and there may be a present of grain as well.

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[1] 82.28 lb.

As there is no Better Living society, marriage still costs a good deal, though less than in the central Punjab. Average charges are Rs.400 for a girl, and Rs.500 for a boy. Jewellery is worn as much as ever. Women do the usual field work: they pick the cotton, take out the roti, and draw the water, but they do not chop the fodder. No grinding is done, but much spinning. Every one present was wearing homespun, but no one homespun only: nearly all dhotis and puggarees were mill-made. Embroidery is done at home—as of old—and a certain amount of sewing. Dung-cakes are used as fuel mixed with wood, but less than before since more manure is required for the fields. This is because in the last five or six years some of them have started growing vegetables and potatoes.

Basket-making The only work done by the men at home is to make string (*ban*) for the beds. The idea of their spinning was gently laughed out of court. I asked whether any one made baskets. They pointed to a cultivator sitting amongst them covered from head to foot with a homespun chaddar. He laughed sheepishly, as if he had been convicted of some childish folly, but on being questioned said that he had learnt the art from the Poorbeahs,[1] who supplied the rest of the village with baskets. I turned to the others and asked why they did not learn from their neighbour and save themselves the rupees they paid the Poorbeahs—they admitted that most of them spent three or four a year in this way, and no one less than one. It was their turn to look sheepish, and they excused themselves by saying that he wanted a rupee for teaching them. I was not surprised to find that this man had no outside debt and owed only Rs.62 to the village bank. Thrift keeps a man solvent in India as everywhere else.

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[1] A United Provinces caste noted for syces.

I inquired about the selling of cattle. They professed the greatest strictness and declared that they did not even sell buffaloes. Of indigenous co-operation there were the usual examples: a chowpal, a watchman who is employed to protect the crops against the monkeys—each harvest he gets twenty-five pounds of grain per plough, about twenty maunds a year—common wells for drinking, and, what is most unusual, the village roads are repaired by common effort. This, they said, was the practice of the neighbourhood.

In the afternoon I took the train for Palwal in Gurgaon. We reached it at 10.30 and walked the two miles to the rest-house under a clear but cold moonlit sky.

V. GURGAON

Rural Reconstruction—Man, Woman, and Beast

December 31st. PALWAL

The People

We are now in the Gurgaon district, half-way between Delhi and Muttra and not far from where Shri Krishna sported with the maidens. The story is remembered and treasured, and it is perhaps no accident that the scene of it should have been laid in a tract where the people are still lovers of music and play rather than of money-making and work. Song, poetry, and bhang are their delights, and they turn more readily to the pleasures than to the business of life. Of finance they know nothing and care less, and if the men of Karnal are more thriftless than those of the central Punjab, the men of Gurgaon, with the exception of the Ahirs,[1] are even more thriftless than those of Karnal. They are also amongst the most dirty and unhealthy in the province, and desperately poor. Ten or twelve years ago Co-operation came amongst them and roused hopes of better things; but though village banks were started in hundreds, they were for the most part a fungus growth, born more of a desire for cheap money than of any will to improve. Without character sound finance is impossible, and here character was lacking. Had it been carefully built up by teaching and practice, and had development not been allowed to outrun this necessarily slow process, something substantial might by this time have been achieved. As it is, foundations have had to be relaid, and with a superstructure of 900 societies, most of which have borrowed more than they should, this is a difficult task. The case is full of warning to those who would force the pace where something more than merely material progress is desired. And it also provides a clue to the understanding of what is now known as the Gurgaon Experiment, which has attracted attention all over India, and outside it as well.

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[1] For some account of this remarkable tribe see the author's *op. cit.* p. 101.

The Gurgaon Experiment

At the end of 1920 Mr. F. L. Brayne, M.C., I.C.S., came to the district as Deputy Commissioner[1] and was so struck by the miserable condition of the people, by their poverty and lack of health, the primitiveness of their farming, the wastefulness of many of their customs, the squalor of their villages and houses, and the depressed state of their women, that he decided that something must be done on a large scale to remedy these evils. The result was an organized 'campaign' embracing the whole district and its 700,000 inhabitants, and to this campaign has been given the name of the Gurgaon Experiment. The objects of the experiment, to quote Mr. Brayne, were 'to jerk the villager out of his old groove, convince him that improvement is possible, and kill his fatalism by demonstrating that both climate, disease, and pest can be successfully fought'; further, to laugh him 'out of his uneconomic and unhealthy customs', and to teach him better ways of living and farming.[2] Expressed in more concrete form the objects were, firstly, to increase the produce of the soil, for 'people's souls cannot be saved while their bellies are empty or their feet cold'; secondly, to stop waste, for 'it is useless increasing the villager's produce if the only result will be to substitute gold bangles for silver, the High Court for the District Court, and motor-cars for bullock carts to take him to fairs and weddings'; thirdly, to secure him good health; and finally, to raise his standard of living. As to measures, to quote Mr. Brayne again: 'Agriculture was easy—better seed, better implements, and more manure. All these things were already worked out and ready to hand. They only required bringing home to the people on a large scale. The reduction of waste was equally simple:

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[1] The head of the district.

[2] F. L. Brayne, *Rural Reconstruction in India*, p. 2.

better finance—that is to say, co-operative credit—arbitration in preference to litigation, the limitation of expenditure on social ceremonies, the discarding of ornaments by children and men, and a substantial reduction in the number worn by women. The health of the village fortunately combines easily with better farming. What now poisons the village will, if conserved for use in the fields, give bigger crops. Every farmer must have a six-foot-deep pit in which to collect everything that will help his crops.' And to raise his standard of living, since the key to this is the condition of woman, inasmuch as she brings up the children and runs the home, the little girl must be sent to school 'at first with her brothers, and as she gets bigger to a separate school', and 'she must be taught everything which a village housewife should know to enable her to keep her family healthy and happy and comfortable, and to regain the position and respect which her ignorance has partially forfeited'. For this purpose 'a school was founded in Gurgaon to train village women so that they might return to teach the little girls at school and the grown-ups in their houses'. In this branch of the work Mrs. Brayne was the moving spirit.

Both objects and measures were thus designed to cover the whole field of rural reconstruction. But how was effect to be given to them over so large an area as a district and amongst a population that was almost entirely illiterate? How, too, was this to be done in the short span of a Deputy Commissioner's office, which, though in this case twice as long as usual, did not extend much over seven years? To quote Mr. Brayne once more, the method was 'to take the whole district as the field of operations, and to deluge the area with every form of propaganda and publicity that we could devise or adopt or afford'.[1] The great ally was the magic lantern, and after that parties of strolling minstrels and glee singers 'roped in and bribed to sing our "dope". They cost very little, and hundreds of villagers will sit enthralled for hours while they tell them in song how to wash the baby, or what sort of wheat to sow!' Finally, 'we plaster the walls with cartoons and posters, distribute leaflets, handbills, and poems, organize shows and demonstrations and competitions . . . and prizes are even given for poems and essays'.[1] In a word the method was propaganda, more propaganda, and still more propaganda. But though Mr. Brayne says that 'propaganda will move mountains',[2] he did not trust to it alone, but backed it with the fullest use of the Deputy Commissioner's authority. 'I always worked hand in glove with the rural leaders,' he explains, 'but once I had them with me in any new departure, I did not hesitate to use the whole of my official influence to obtain acceptance for it and to get it carried out in the villages.'[3] And he adds: 'We forced the pace deliberately. We were told inside and outside the district that the squalor of the village was incurable, and even if there were a remedy, its application was impossible. In the short time at our disposal—and we never knew how short or how long it would be—we had to disprove both statements and establish a *fait accompli* to the satisfaction both of the district and of the world at large.'[4]

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[1] F. L. Brayne, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Such in brief outline was the Gurgaon Experiment. The first question that arises is—how far was it a new experiment? In one respect it was entirely novel. Never before in any part of India has propaganda for the improvement of the village been used so intensively and over so wide an area; and never before has it been combined with the fullest use of the Deputy Commissioner's authority, than which in the eyes of the villager no authority is greater. Some of the measures, too, were new or given so vigorous a life that, for a time at least, they took on a new complexion: for example, the manure pit and the systematic cleaning of scores of villages; the substitution on many wells of the Persian wheel for the charsa or leather bucket, and the purchase by the district board of over 600 stud bulls from the Government cattle farm at Hissar to improve the local breed of cattle; co-education and the training of a special staff to teach girls; and the creation of a body of men called village guides to work as 'propagandists' in the village, and to act as a link between it and the many departments of Government engaged in improving rural conditions. In the objects there was nothing new: the agricultural, veterinary, education, co-operative, and health departments have all been trying, most of them for many years, to give effect to them in their respective fields. And outside the Punjab one need only mention the 250 Mahila Samitis or Women's Institutes founded in Bengal by Mrs. G. S. Dutt.[1] But if the objects were old, Mr. and Mrs. Brayne saw them with a new vision, and with the energy and enthusiasm born of vision galvanized all around them to 'a combined assault' upon the problem. The second question is—did the Experiment succeed? This question is less easy to answer, and no answer can be attempted till, in accordance with the method followed on this tour, the villager himself has been asked his opinion. This I hope to do this week. Meanwhile I give below very briefly the gist of what has been said to me here and elsewhere on this tour by some of those concerned in the Experiment.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 3. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The Manure Pit

The most successful innovation is the manure pit. In Gurgaon, as in most districts, it had been the practice to pile manure in and around the village, where it was exposed to the wasteful influences of sun, wind, and rain, and to let refuse and rubbish lie about the lanes without making much effort to remove them, still less to convert them into manure. The waste of this was obvious and, in a country hungering for manure, deplorable. Nor did it conduce to either health or decency. The manure pit was therefore introduced for the storage of all refuse and rubbish, which were to be collected and thrown into it daily. The standard prescribed was two pits for each family, one to contain the refuse ready for use as manure, and the other to be available for fresh refuse and to be fitted up at one end as a rustic latrine. Pits innumerable have been dug all over the district, but though their advantages are manifest, all agreed that they would never have been dug without the freest use of official authority. An official who was for some time stationed in the district remarked, in no very sympathetic spirit, that all 'uplift', as the Experiment was once not very happily called, was done 'by order and through fear', and that had the people been allowed to choose for themselves they would have had none of it, but were too docile to say so. Another critic, who was by no means hostile, said he had once been present when a revenue official was ordering pits to be dug. They must be so many feet long, said the official quoting the standard measurements, so many feet wide, and so many deep. The villagers agreed readily enough to the pits, but to facilitate the removal of their contents begged to be allowed to make them with a slope. Impossible, said the official; the orders are that the pits must be of this size, and of this size they must be. The incident will surprise no one who has had experience of administration in this country; for who has not suffered from the over-zealous subordinate? The same critic admitted that the people had been awakened by the intensive propaganda brought to bear on them, and that most of them realized that what was done was for their good, but he said they were too lazy to help themselves. Comparatively few used the pits even for the storage of refuse, and almost none as latrines. This was the case in Rewari, and I gathered that it was not very different elsewhere. A few villages here and there—for example, five or six in Palwal and ten or twelve in Ballabgarh—are kept more or less clean, but most are cleaned up only when an 'officer' is expected round. This again will not surprise any one who is familiar with the conditions of Indian village life. It was thought that perhaps more might have been achieved had the peasants not been urged to remove all their rubbish themselves, and had a greater effort been made to induce the village sweepers to do it by increasing their harvest dues or their daily allowance of bread. But Mr. Brayne, believing that it was essential to the welfare of the village that it should learn to dispense with the more menial castes, made it part of his programme that every family should do its own cleaning.

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[1] For an account of these, see G. S. Dutt, *A Woman of India*, 1929, ch. x.

The Persian Wheel

On the agricultural side, apart from the manure pit which touches health as well as agriculture, the main effort has been to substitute the Persian wheel for leather bucket and rope, the iron Gurgaon plough for the wooden country plough, and the pedigree Hissar bull for the local country-bred. Opinions differ about the Persian wheel. For the shallower wells, where the water is only 20 to 25 feet from the surface, it is popular, because it can be worked by a man and a boy with a pair of bullocks as against four men and two pairs of bullocks required for the bucket. But for the deeper wells it is not much liked, because, so the cultivators say, the strain of keeping 80 to 100 water-pots revolving is too great for the weakling bullocks of the district. It is also difficult to get it repaired, for few understand its mechanism. To remedy this, two blacksmiths have been imported from another district. Meanwhile many wheels are out of action, and in one village near here three out of seven are reported to have been replaced by the charsa. On the other hand, in the riverain area of the Jumna where the water is comparatively near the surface, it appears to be appreciated; and in other areas, where there is acute scarcity, it is being fitted to old wells which have fallen into disuse;

and it is generally admitted that where it can be used with advantage, it is to be preferred to the bucket.[1]

Ploughs and Bulls

All agree that the Gurgaon plough is unpopular. Costing Rs.35, hundreds have been bought, and scores are lying unused. In the Palwal tahsil, out of 400 not more than 100 are in use; and in Rewari, where over 200 were bought, the proportion is said to be even less. Like so much that is modern and apparently beneficial, it does not suit local conditions. It is too expensive for most and said not to be easily handled. Some also complain of its steel. As to the Hissar bull, opinions differ. Upon nothing has more money been spent, for 643 have been acquired by the district board at a cost of Rs.250 each; and as they were all sold by Government at Rs.50 below cost, their acquisition has involved an expenditure of nearly two lakhs (£15,000).[2] One official said that 75 per cent of the people liked them, but others mentioned that they had heard many complaints; for instance, that they were lazy at their work, and too big and heavy for the cows.

Village Guides

One of the most novel features of the Experiment is the village guide, of whom there are now thirty-four. All agree that at present they are doing little or no good. Appointed to act as guides, philosophers, and friends to the villagers in their beat, they were hurriedly selected and insufficiently trained, and have since been inadequately supervised. Most of them are only 'middle-pass' or 'middle-fail', and nearly all mere striplings (*chokre*). The villager will not listen to them on account of their youth, and they cannot compel him to do so for want of authority. Their chief duty is propaganda, but as this may mean anything from a formal lecture to a chat over a huqqa, it is difficult to know whether any real work is being done. One of the most trustworthy of my informants, who is constantly touring, said roundly that he had never come across anything due to a guide. Meanwhile at Rs.50 a month each, they are costing over Rs.20,000 a year.

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[1] Since this was written the scarcity has become much more acute, and I am informed that the demand for Persian wheels has greatly increased.

[2] On the Hissar farm it costs about Rs.300 to rear a bull up to three years with free grazing: see evidence of the Live Stock Expert to the Punjab Government before the Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.* viii. 134.

Co-education More novel even than the village guide is the co-education of boy and girl. 'Train the woman', says Mr. Brayne, 'and the village will uplift itself.'[1] And as village girl-schools are few and schoolmistresses difficult to get, he conceived the idea of sending the girls to the primary school along with the boys. My informants were unanimous that the experiment had so far not met with success. In the Palwal tahsil it is being tried in only five or six schools, and even in these the girls are said to be taught apart from the boys. This, too, is only possible because the wife of the schoolmaster is prepared to teach them.

In listening to these criticisms I was struck by the fact that most of the critics were in full sympathy with the Experiment and only criticized it because they were reluctantly compelled to do so by the results. At least two said that if Mr. Brayne had stayed another two years in the district, his work would have taken root. For the spirit that inspired this work the greatest admiration was expressed.

January 1*st*, 1929. PALWAL *to* HATHIN

The Experiment For part of the way to-day I was accompanied by one of the most intelligent co-operators in the tahsil, a fine well-built man just past his prime and the owner of large acres. Speaking of the Experiment, he said it had opened people's eyes to their wretched condition, and though they were unwilling to make the effort required to set things straight, they realized that they ought to do so. 'And how many eyes out of a hundred have closed since Brayne Sahib went?' I asked. 'Fifty?' 'More, Sahib.' 'Sixty or seventy?' 'More still, about eighty.' 'And of all the things that have been introduced, which do the people like best?' 'The Persian wheel.' 'Why?' I inquired. 'Because it needs only two men and the charsa needs four, and the watering can be done quicker.' 'Then they like it best because it means less work?' He laughed, and said that was so. And what did the people like least? 'The plough; many had bought it, but few used it.'

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[1] Brayne, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Cleaning the Village

About the pitting of manure and cleaning the village, he said that both were done, but usually only when an 'officer' was expected round. Then the rubbish was collected and flung into the pits. Do the people like having to clean their villages? 'A few do, but most don't. My own village is clean, because I keep them at it with a stick (*már-már karta hun*),' a remark which recalled a proverb—a Jat is a friend when there is a stick in the hand![1] 'And have they been hard at work this morning cleaning things up for my coming?' He laughed again. The village which I visited was certainly a pleasant contrast to every other village I have seen on this tour. What did he think about compulsion? Should people be compelled, or merely persuaded, to be clean? 'Compulsion', he said, 'is necessary, but to start with, it should be the compulsion (*majburi*) of the birádari. When that is understood, a law should be passed.' Meanwhile most regard the cleaning of the village and the carrying out of their refuse as a nuisance (*taklíf*). In his village it had been arranged that the sweepers should get two chapatis a day instead of the customary one, but this was an unpopular tax. In some villages harvest dues are increased instead. In others, the thriftiest, the people avoid all extra charge by carrying out the refuse themselves.

A Village School

We stopped on our way at a Hindu Jat village of about 150 houses built upon a hillock compounded of the debris of former villages. There are six chowpals, and the one I entered was as dirty as usual. It was virtually a godown, and amongst the properties stored there was a gigantic drum kept to add to the uproar of Holi, and a well-constructed carriage (*bheli*) finely ornamented with brass. The primary school was almost as dirty as the chowpal and looked like a room in a deserted bungalow. The village, naturally enough, cares little for education, and provides only six out of the thirty-seven boys on the rolls. Theoretically co-education is in force, but of the twelve girls supposed to attend only two or three come. These are taught by the schoolmaster's wife. The zaildar, who lives in the village, says that co-education is feasible up to the age of ten or eleven, but not later.

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[1] *Jat mittar, tan hath chhittar.* The zaildar was, no doubt, speaking metaphorically.

Houses New and Old

Much the finest house in the village is a new one which is being built by the zaildar at a cost of Rs. 10,000, none of it borrowed, he said. He is using the beautiful red freestone of the Agra district and had evidently secured a good mason, for the rooms were well designed and adorned with arches, pillars, and pleasantly moulded capitals. They were also well ventilated, and the largest had a chimney. There was to be another in the kitchen, but charcoal would be used as coal was expensive. An unusual feature was a cistern with a tap. From this very modern residence we passed on to a house of the old type, the dwelling of a Hindu Jat. Though he owned 60 or 70 acres, his house was on the most modest scale—kachha, of course, and built round a tiny courtyard. The only indication of prosperity was a separate abode (*haweli*) for the cattle. Thanks to this, the house was perfectly clean, as indeed most villages would be clean if only the cattle could be stalled outside.[1] The artistic feeling of the district had expressed itself in a line of pygmy cavaliers riding gaily across a wall on highly coloured hobby-horses. This was the work of the women. So too was a staff, of umbrella's length, which hung on another wall carefully wrapped in cloth. Decked with tassels of many colours, with cowry shells and metal pieces, it is unwrapped every spring when the Hindu saturnalia of the Holi comes round. Then the more playful wenches of the village, remembering no doubt the milkmaids that sported with Krishna, run after the men and prod them with the tinkling wand. The most expensive thing in the house was a large brass dish (*táli*) valued Rs.2/8, and the most novel a pair of chicks[1] to keep out the flies. The latter had been made by the Jat himself. If a zemindar can make chicks, why, I asked, can he not make his own baskets? At present, as in Karnal,[2] they are bought from the Poorbeahs. The zaildar said deferentially that he would try to change this, but it would be difficult as the tamarisk twigs (*jhao*[3]) would have to be brought from the riverain of the Jumna ten or twelve miles away. There is no lack of leisure, for all that the peasants have to do at present is to cut and chop fodder for their cattle. This is so scarce that they are driven to lop the roadside trees, and a sad sight it is to see every avenue lifting mutilated arms to the cloudless sky.

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[1] Cf. p. 219.

A Temple Priest

The village has a temple and a priest to look after it. He was present at my inspection of the bank and wore a thick black moustache, a boorish look, and an orange blanket. His home was in Bengal, and he was brought here by his guru, who used to be the temple priest of the village. They had apparently met at Ajodhia in the United Provinces. In India the devotees of religion are perhaps the real nationalists, travelling far and wide and caring little for provincial boundaries. Every evening this priest reads the Ramayan aloud to the ten or twenty villagers who come to the temple. At the rate of two hours a day, he would read the whole story in two or three months. He said he explained things to his hearers. To test this, I asked if any one had been there yesterday evening. The first person who stood up, a Jat, had no idea of what had been read; but the next, a Brahmin, in a dirty Gandhi cap, gave a good account of what he had heard. Another Jat did the same, and it was the more convincing, for coming after the Brahmin had gone he had heard a different bit of the story. The zaildar said, however, that no real religious teaching was given to any one in the village, and certainly not to either boy or girl. All the women were illiterate and could teach nothing. The priest has been given 8 or 9 acres for his maintenance, but he does not cultivate them himself. Besides him, there are three or four family priests to perform the rights of marriage and death and to tell people the date and hour at which important things should be done. One of them had fixed the exact minute when work should begin on the zaildar's house and had recited the appropriate mantra.

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[1] Blinds of split reeds.

[2] See p. 118.

[3] *Tamarix dioica.*

Worship of the Pipal

That we are more in the heart of India is shown by the fact that the worship of the pipal tree (already described[1]) still flourishes. Every Saturday women pour libations round it, and men still believe that the gods come and sit in its branches to listen to the music of its leaves. When we spoke of this, a Brahmin stood up and quoted the following pleasant verse (*slok*):

> The root is Brahma, the trunk Vishnu, and the branches Mahadeo;
> On each leaf are gods. All hail to thee, king of the trees.[2]

No oath taken under the pipal to tell the truth in the name of God is violated. I asked whether (as in Sleeman's time) they connected scarcity with positive misdoing. Apparently not, but only with their general sinfulness. As one person said: 'It is according as we have lived,' and the words he used—*hámára karm*—

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[1] See p. 21.

[2] *Mule Brahma, thale Vishnu, sakha dar Maheshram;*
Patre patre Deva nam. Brahm Raie namstme.

showed that he was referring to past lives as well as to present.

Cattle and Religion

Offerings of food are still made to cows on the first of the month, not however of flour but of fodder. Every one brings his contribution to where the cattle of the village assemble before they are taken out to graze, and the offerings may amount to fifteen or twenty maunds. Very few, and only the old, make a daily offering. No one objects to inoculation for plague, for two or three years ago, at Mr. Brayne's instance, every one was inoculated, even the women: before this they used to fly at the doctor's approach. Now many let even their cattle be done, but most think it safer to drive them under a charm slung across the entrance to the village. There are two Hissar bulls, each of which cost Rs.250. In each case the village paid Rs.50, and the District Board Rs.200. The villagers like them better than the old worthless bulls that served them before, but would prefer good local bulls, for those from Hissar are heavy and lazy, and their offspring require more food and give less milk than local stock. Even so, the price of a four-year-old Hissar-bred bullock was put at Rs.200 to Rs.250 as against Rs.150 to Rs.175 for one locally bred.[1]

The people said they did not sell their cattle however old or useless, but either kept them at home or sent them to the gowshála.[2] But when I inquired whether any of those present (about 100) had done the latter, no one claimed that he had, and the zaildar sitting at my side said in a low voice: 'All who wish to do so sell; only those with scruples don't.' Another zaildar who was present, a Hindu Rajput, said much the same, and a vet whom I met during the day declared that the great scarcity of fodder was driving the Jats to sell their cattle 'in thousands'. To satisfy religious susceptibilities, the butcher who buys them employs Jat to deal with Jat, and Gujar to deal with Gujar, &c. Where public opinion is strong, sale takes place after dark, and next morning the absence of the cow is put down to a thief who cannot be traced. Or a cow is taken out, ostensibly on a journey, and sold to an agent lying in wait in the *jangal*.[1] In this case, the cow is said to be lost. Where there is a panchayet, public opinion is organized and selling is rarer; and panchayets are sometimes formed expressly to prevent selling. There was a case of this at Hodal a few years ago, when four or five hundred Jats who had gathered from the villages round for a funeral feast agreed that the selling of cattle must cease and banded themselves together for the purpose. And even where there is no panchayet, feeling can still be so strong as to produce a riot. An example of this is the disturbance which took place last May at Softa, a village near Palwal, when the Muhammadan inhabitants celebrated the Bakri Id by the sacrifice of an entirely useless cow. 'It appears', says the official report, 'that there was a cow of the village of Softa which was barren. This cow was useless to the inhabitants of the village for any other purpose but slaughter, but the Jat villagers of the surrounding villages had allowed it to graze in their pastures to preserve it. It was this cow which the inhabitants of Softa very economically decided to sacrifice'[2]—with the result that fourteen lives were lost.

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[1] To-day (May 18) I saw near Dax in the south of France a pair of remarkably fine four-year-old bullocks bred at Pau and in height and strength closely resembling the Hissar breed. The owner had paid 5,500 francs for the pair, i.e. about Rs.300 each.

[2] An almshouse for aged and infirm cattle.

The Panchayet Act

An unusual feature of the village is that it has a panchayet under the Act of 1922, the only one in the tahsil.[3] In three or four years it has settled only three civil cases. This meagre result was attributed to the absence of litigiousness in the village. Under the Act fines can be imposed for insanitary arrangements, but this had never been done. The zaildar, who was president of the panchayet, said he preferred to rely on personal influence. From what I have heard of the Act on this tour, panchayets are only taking root where a special officer of the right type has been appointed to foster their growth.

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[1] Uncultivated land with vegetation not necessarily either thick or tropical.

[2] Mr. E. C. Marten's report of the 16th June 1928 published in the *Punjab Gazette*, dated the 6th July 1928.

[3] There are ten others in the district.

Chamars and Untouchability

Chamars here are not regarded as untouchables. Their only disability is that in an assemblage like to-day's they must sit apart and upon the ground itself. 'They would not wish to do anything else,' said the zaildar complacently; 'they like to show the difference between them and us.' In other respects they are free: they draw water at the well, they enter people's houses (the sweeper may only do so for one purpose), and their touch does not contaminate. 'Their work is our work, and we mingle so much together that we think it no harm.' Did they eat the flesh of animals that died? Curiously, the zemindars did not know, and the Chamars, many of whom were sitting apart behind me, had to be asked. They replied that they had given it up four or five years ago, and that now they did not even do tanning but bought their skins ready tanned. Most of them, moreover, are cultivators and have their own ploughs, and except that their social status is lower, there is little difference between them and the rest of the village. Their numbers have probably had something to do with this, for in this tahsil they greatly outnumber the Jats, being 22,000 against 12,000. The sweepers, on the other hand, are untouchable, probably because they clear away the night soil. They are not allowed to draw water from the well, and any one who touches them must bathe. Yet they provide the three villages represented at my inspection with their midwives. No one attempted to deny the absurdity of this.

Women's Work and Men's Clothes

The birth of a boy is an expensive affair and costs from Rs.100 to Rs.150. To make up, nothing is spent upon the birth of a girl. Much used to be wasted upon funerals, but under the combined influence of the Experiment and the times this has been stopped.

Upon marriage much less is spent than in the central Punjab—Rs.200 in the case of a boy, and Rs.300 in that of a girl. The women work as hard as the Rohtak Jats. In the field they do everything except drive the plough and work the well. They go to bed at ten or eleven, and rise between four and five to grind. For a family of five this takes two hours. They take their babies to the fields and leave them under a tree while they work. It was admitted that they work harder than the men, and that so much work is bad for them. It is perhaps a good thing, therefore, that they spin less than they did—50 per cent less, said the zaildar. Amongst the hundred people present there was no one clad entirely in homespun: all the dhotis were mill-made. On the other hand, the two zaildars were the only two who wore no homespun at all. The usual thing was said in defence of mill-made clothes—they were cheaper and involved far less trouble.

Food Not much wheat is eaten: it is too valuable a crop and, when harvested, is sold or made over to the bania. In summer the staple crops are barley and gram, and in winter bájra[1] and jowár.[2] As the Hindu Jat eats neither meat nor eggs, no poultry are kept. Nor are vegetables grown. The patwari said that in the five villages of his circle there was only one man (a Koli) who grew them; but it is significant of the rising standard of living that this year one of the zaildars has started growing carrots for home consumption. The difficulty of growing vegetables in this neighbourhood is that the water in the wells is brackish. As Sleeman noted when he passed through the country ninety years ago, this is not good for any crop.

Co-operation There are three small banks in the village. Three or four members had a good idea of what they were about and what they should do, but the others were hazy on the subject. The average rate of interest is 24 per cent, and it is said that grain dealings with the bania are nearly as common as of old. The bania is the cultivator's banker and at harvest time takes all his produce except about two months' supply. When this is exhausted, he advances from time to time what is needed. The cultivator, of course, keeps no eye upon the account and is therefore entirely at his mercy. There are the usual forms of indigenous co-operation: two or three boys to herd the cattle; a watchman to look after the crops when they begin to ripen—not before, as there are no monkeys about; and a few large vessels for weddings. Each house supplies labour in turn to repair the drinking wells and the tank; and at sowing and harvest time neighbours help each other in their fields. Roads are never repaired in common, but the oldest man present, a Jat of 82, said that up to about fifty years ago this used to be done.

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[1] Spiked millet (*Holcus spicatus*).

[2] Great millet (*Holcus sorghum*).

As we left the village, the setting sun lit up the old brick buildings and the square mud-plastered houses on the hillock. Groups of women stood on the roofs to watch our going, and the reds and blues of their draperies glowed against the evening sky. On the way we passed a herd of antelope grazing barely 100 yards from our path. They looked at us curiously, and continued grazing. Yet a little later, on the high road, we met a motor full of Muhammadans returning to Delhi with four antelope on the bonnet and five on the grid. Near Hathin, we came upon an old shrine with a small tank, where a pir was buried, no one knew when. Both Hindu and Muhammadan attend the yearly fair and do puja—which is a further example of the neighbourly way in which these two communities mingle together in the village when left to themselves.

[9 MILES]

January 2. HATHIN *to* SIKRAWA

Hathin is a 'kasba' or townlet of 2,500 inhabitants with a Middle Vernacular school, a veterinary hospital, and a mission dispensary. Like Palwal, and many other places in the district, it is built upon a mountain of rubble, to which for centuries each generation has contributed its quota. Once, as its name implies, 'the town of the elephants', it is now entirely inglorious but has a building or two which recall the glories of the past. And, as is common in this tract, there are many signs of artistic feeling: thus, a bania has given his new house a beautifully carved doorway, through which one caught a glimpse of a dignified courtyard.

The Experiment

One of the zaildars of the neighbourhood came to see me and talked about the experiment. Of the thirty odd villages in his zail, ten or twelve keep themselves more or less clean, whether there is an 'officer' coming or not. This is done by paying the sweepers for the extra work. Since much of the zail is irrigated by canal, there is a strong demand for manure. This has made the pits popular, and they like them 'beyond measure' (*had se ziada*). They appreciate the iron ploughs and Persian wheels less. In his zail, of the seventeen ploughs only five are in use; and of the ten Persian wheels, only three. The Persian wheel has several drawbacks. The village carpenter does not know how to repair them, and the wells, with the water thirty feet down, are too deep for a wheel. Two leather buckets can be used together, and at this depth they draw more water than a Persian wheel. If people would consent to work the wheel by night as well as by day, it would be as good, but they will not do this, as it is not their custom and they do not like work. At this depth, too, a Persian wheel requires 100 water-pots, which makes it a heavy business for the bullocks. Also in this area the water-level sinks rapidly, and a Persian wheel cannot be adjusted so easily as a bucket.

Turning to education, he said there were nine schools in the zail, but in only one co-education. Sixty per cent of the people thought co-education bad, and forty per cent were in favour of it up to nine or ten—to the age of puberty, in fact. There was no communalism in his circle but there was plenty of faction. This, however, did not so much divide villages in two as one village against another—a relic of mutiny days when villages took opposite sides. The position of Chamars is like that described yesterday. Only sweepers are untouchable, and where they have no wells they may have to wait half an hour, or even an hour, before they can get some one to draw water for them. The younger generation, however, have given up sprinkling themselves with water—the result of 'the new light'.

Beggars and Doctors

The new light has not yet affected the midwives. There are five in Hathin—a Chamar, a beggar, a butcher's wife, and two sweeperesses, all untrained. Beggars are innumerable. There are five or ten in every village and there must be, he said, over 100 in Hathin. One picturesque fellow I saw going round in a tight-fitting pair of mustard-coloured trousers. The Brahmins, of whom there are a good number in the town, are far less sought after for their mantras than they were and consequently find it more difficult to live.[1] Many have been driven to work in the fields. Only women consult the dispensers of charms, and they mostly do it for their children's sakes. The zaildar said there must be ten who deal in these things—Chamars, Bairágis, and Kahárs. There were also over twenty untrained hakims—Brahmins, Banias, &c.—and three more who had some kind of diploma (*sanad*). The most popular of these was a Brahmin who had been trained in Vedic medicine at Aligarh. He more than held his own against the local hospitals, since the nearest was seven miles away. Another of the three, finding he was not earning enough, had become a patwari.

The Experiment

On my way to Sikrawa I stopped at a large village with about 350 houses to see five banks—all bad. I inquired about the experiment. The people said they cleaned house and village daily and put all the rubbish into their pits, but the patwari informed me privately that they only did this when they were told. The village crier went round once or twice a month for the purpose. Co-education was frankly disliked, and it was admitted that the Gurgaon plough was not used. 'It is taken out for show,' exclaimed a voice in the background, 'then it has rest (*chain*).'

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[1] The same thing is happening in Ajmer-Merwara.

Religious Teaching There are three mosques in the village, and each has a Meo as mullah—we are now in the country of the Meos. One had been trained at Delhi, another at Deoband, and the third at home: two were present. All three read the Koran to those who come to the mosque. One said he did so every morning at six, and this morning twenty-five to thirty were present. All, too, teach boys to read it in the Arabic, without, however, attempting to explain it. About thirty boys are taught in this way; also eight girls. No woman in the village can read it, but in a village close by there are three who can do so—two of them daughters of one of the mullahs.

Pardah and Work We got on to Pardah. The chief mullah explained that according to the Koran a woman might expose hands, feet, and face, but nothing else.[1] The Meos, who do not keep pardah, said a little ruefully that the mullah was constantly telling them they were wrong; but they were helpless as the women had to work. They work as hard as the Jat women mentioned yesterday—harder than the men, indeed—and it was admitted that this was 'not good'. The men would have little to do at this time of year but for the scarcity which keeps them busy lopping and chopping the trees for fodder. No one does any work apart from cultivation. The baskets are all made by the sweepers and cost each household at least Rs.1/12 a year. It had not occurred to them that if they did this simple bit of work themselves, they might save enough to pay one of their six-monthly share contributions to the bank.

Panchayets The Meo has not the foggiest idea of thrift, but he has a good idea of co-operation. All the indigenous forms described yesterday are in force in the village except the common herding of cattle. Their four irrigation wells are jointly owned and worked: as many as twenty-four families share in one, and from five to fifteen in the others. They are used only in times of scarcity, because the water is brackish and spoils the land. There is an old-established panchayet, and it forms part of a larger panchayet which governs the affairs of the twelve Meo villages of the neighbourhood. The latter last met in May to assist the police in discovering who had committed a certain murder and to help them to decide who should be prosecuted.

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[1] Cf. p. 268.

When we continued our march, the sun was but a spear's length above the Aravalli hills, which mark the end of the Punjab plain and the beginnings of Rajputana. Flat-topped, their long low line across the horizon recalled the hills of Tourraine, and seen against the setting sun and steeped in blue shadow, they made a beautiful background to the undulating plain, which was all ablaze with the mustard yellow of the rape-seed. At Sikrawa I found T—— and a colony of tents. T—— is the first person I have met on this tour who is touring on a horse.

[9 MILES]

January 3rd. HALT

Meos and Money-lenders

The cold last night was intense and two out of my five followers are down with fever. We are now deep in the country of the Meos, a Muhammadan tribe claiming Rajput descent but probably of aboriginal origin.[1] They are bad cultivators and worse financiers, but hold together with the closeness of a secret society. About 100 of them were in camp this morning to attest transfers of land, and amongst them some banias. One of these admitted that the ordinary rate of interest was 24 per cent, that there was not much difficulty about recovery as they carried away most of the grain at harvest time, and that a loan doubled itself in five years. Receipts are rarely asked for and only given when the whole debt is cleared. The Meos said that a loan was subject to an initial cut of 5 per cent—for instance, a man borrowing Rs.100 would get only Rs.95—and that interest was charged as well; also that grain was valued above the market rate when sold to them, and below it when taken from them. This is a common complaint south of the Sutlej. Money-lending in this tract has one unusual feature: the bigger landowners act as sureties for the smaller. An old Meo, whom I met in another village, said that in the past the bania would make his advances to the Meos through one of their leaders and leave it to him to distribute the amount. The leader was responsible for the loan, and as he was trusted, 'no finger-mark was taken.' (The taking of finger-marks in token of receipt started only twenty years ago.) The advantage of this to the bania was that he got better security for his loans, and to the Meo, better terms. The taking of sureties is the relic of the system, and the Meo still gets better terms when they are taken.

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[1] They are probably descended from the aboriginal Bhils (*Gurgaon Gaz.*, 1910, p. 60).

Food I asked the people what they eat. They usually have three meals a day. When they get up, they eat a kind of porridge made of butter-milk and meal (*dallia*) boiled overnight and taken cold in the morning with more butter-milk.[1] In the middle of the day they take spiced pulse (*dál*) and boiled greens (*ság*) with girdle cakes of unleavened bread; and in the evening, more bread and porridge. Owing to the scarcity, they have given up the midday meal, but eat more meat instead. They generally eat this once a week, but at present they take it every third or fourth day, for with no fodder for the cattle and the butcher hard at work it is cheaper than usual. At Jaithána, a less prosperous village which we visited later, the people said that in winter, when the days were short, they had only two meals a day and that the only change they could make in a time of scarcity was to eat less at each meal. This they are doing now. They are also making their bread of barley and gram instead of the usual bajra and jowar, which have failed. In the cold weather they prefer bajra and jowar as they are heating, while barley and gram are 'cold'. A point that illustrates the poverty of the tract is that no wheat seems to be eaten except on festivals. It was much the same in eighteenth-century Japan. 'Even in normal times the peasants did not have enough to live on. They ate cheaper grains and potatoes, and very seldom tasted the rice they produced, for it was taken away . . . , and what little was left them had to be sold to get necessary money.'[1]

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[1] The Meos call this porridge *mehri*, the Ahirs and Jats *rebri*.

Vegetables and Poultry

In Jaithana no one grows vegetables, as all the wells are brackish. People buy them from hawkers who come once a week from a village five or six miles away where the water is sweet. In Sikrawa ten or fifteen Meos grow and sell them. Shooting this evening, I came across a small field laid out in beautifully ridged little plots, where two Meos for the first time were sowing onions. Amongst the hundred present at Sikrawa only two kept poultry. One had thirty birds, the other a dozen: in neither case were they kept for sale. But at Jaithana a young man stood up and said that six months ago he had started keeping hens and only yesterday had sold twenty-five to a trader for Rs.11/8. He had eight or nine left, and as his original stock had cost him only the three rupees paid for a setting of eggs, he was doing well. Following his example, another Meo had just invested in a cock and a hen. A little before this some one had growled out something about the poverty of the peasant—how he worked all day and found no roti at the end of it. I pointed the moral. A main reason for the peasant's poverty in a baráni tract like this is that he does nothing but till the land, and the land does not give him enough to live on with comfort. 'We only do farming,' said an old man at Sikrawa; 'we have no concern with anything else.' Yet there is time enough for other things if the people would only do them, and those present admitted that they did not work as hard as the women, and that they would not have much to do at present were there no scarcity and had not trees to be lopped for fodder. In spite of this they do not even make their own baskets, still less their own clothes.

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[1] Matsuyo Takizawa, *The Penetration of Money Economy in Japan*, 1927, p. 78.

Cleanliness

As very little cotton is grown, clothes are mostly bought and almost no spinning is done. The Jaithana folk looked a dirty lot, but then they have no washerman. The more prosperous use the washerman at Sikrawa; others, both men and women, wash their own clothes at the well, which, one may suppose, they will not do more often than they can help. The inhabitants of Sikrawa asserted that they kept their village clean, but admitted that they paid the sweepers nothing extra. The two were obviously incompatible, and inquiries showed that no regular cleaning was done.

Religion

Both villages have a mullah, but neither mullah can do more than read the Koran in Arabic. The Sikrawa mullah, a Meo, said he had spent three years at Delhi learning to do this, but confessed that he could not understand what he read. He is now imparting this fruitless knowledge to twenty boys and two girls. The Jaithana mullah does no teaching, but a maulvi comes from Delhi every two or three months and preaches to the people. This has made them stricter about their prayers. They used to join the Hindus in celebrating the Holi, but gave up doing so twenty-five years ago as they were told it was wrong (*buri bát*). On the other hand, they follow the Hindus in treating Chamars and sweepers as untouchable, and when necessary sprinkle themselves with water. The patwari says the more religious (*namázi*) actually wash both their persons and their clothes. Some of the Chamars, but not the sweepers, have recently given up eating the flesh of animals that have died. There are four professional beggars in Jaithana, and many more come from outside. But their power of extortion is not what it was. 'If we don't give, they curse us. We used to fear them for this, but now we know that apart from God there is nothing.' A Chamar woman acts as midwife for both villages.

The Hissar Bull

In both villages, of all the subjects discussed the Hissar bull proved the most provocative. At first there was manifest reluctance to say anything against him. But at Sikrawa, when the people realized that their real opinion was wanted, there was a babel of voices, as if a sluice had suddenly burst, and they all began giving each other their reasons for disliking him. He was too big for their cows; after covering ten or fifteen he got slack; he was too sociable and would join company with the other bulls of the neighbourhood: as many as eight or nine would get together, and so many in one village did a lot of damage. What about their offspring? I asked. They were not gentle (*bhále*), said some; not beautiful (*khubsurat*), said others. (Some word about beauty is constantly coming into talk in this district.) Their foreheads were too broad, their sheaths too long, their appetites too large. At Jaithana, it was even asserted, with, I think, some extravagance of statement, that a four-year-old bullock of local breed would fetch Rs.50 more than one bred from a Hissar bull. 'They are very bad,' said one outspoken critic, 'but it is an order and we keep them.' In both villages the feeling expressed was stronger than anything I have encountered on this tour, and opinion was unanimously in favour of having a good bull of local breed. In Muhammadan Jaithana, all the old cattle are going to the butcher and rarely fetch more than five or six rupees each, and never more than ten or twelve.

Rats

Shooting this evening, I noticed scores of rats having their evening meal off a crop of rape. Some, sitting on their haunches, were devouring it greedily on the spot;

others, more timid, were scurrying home with a green leaf in their mouths; and others still were nibbling in comfort and security at the mouth of their holes. The damage to the crops must be enormous. Yet twenty years ago no Hindu would lift a finger against the rat. This was partly due to the law of Ahimsa,[1] which forbids the taking of life, and partly to the fact that the rat is under the special protection of the god Ganesh. The story goes that Ganesh was once not invited to an important wedding and in revenge bade the rats undermine the road to be taken by the marriage party. This they did so effectively that the road collapsed and the party fell in. Consequently those who honour Ganesh feed the rat with a preparation of flour, sugar, and ghi called 'churma', and address him affectionately as 'uncle' (*Mama Musa*). Till a few years ago, therefore, those who preached his extermination passed unheeded; but now such have been the ravages of plague[2] that opinion has changed and orthodoxy has had to bow to necessity, and even Hindus will freely use the trap to catch 'uncle rat'.

This evening, no doubt because I was not alone, my khidmatgar[3] somewhat shyly produced a box of crackers, which he had bought out of his modest earnings, believing from his long experience of the younger members of my family that no Christmas week was complete without them. The appeal was irresistible and the day ended, to his delight and our confusion, in purple caps and crowns.

[9 MILES]

January 4th. SIKRAWA *to* PANHUANA

Another bitterly cold night, which my khidmatgar, with the hardy endurance of the Indian servant, passed under one of the open wings of my tent, respectfully but stoutly refusing the shelter of my bathroom.

Village Notices

Passing through Sikrawa this morning, we noticed a number of propaganda leaflets stuck on the walls of the houses. They were so clean that they had obviously been put up for our benefit, and yet so skied that no one not on a horse could possibly read them. Some one said apologetically: 'The children pull them down if we put them lower.'

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[1] See p. 370 (note).

[2] Plague is carried by the rat flea.

[3] Butler.

Pirs

On the way I fell into talk with a Meo Subedar about pirs. A member of his family retired from schoolmastering four years ago, and, following a lifelong habit, settled at a little distance from his village and immersed himself in meditation and prayer. This has gained for him such a reputation for sanctity that he is beginning to be regarded as a pir and has already fifty followers (*mureed*). Near Sohna (not far away) lives a pir of such fame that he has 5,000 followers, hundreds of whom come once a year from all parts—Bombay, Karachi, and Kabul—to do him honour and themselves good. His grandfather, the first of the line, gained a great reputation by performing miracles. The most notable was his power to be in two places at once and to read the Friday prayers in the Jama Masjid at Delhi and in his own village at the same time. Many had seen this! His grandson now reigns in his stead.

A village Band

I stopped on the way at Bisru, a large village of 425 houses perched on the usual eminence, half hill, half rubble. I was greeted with musical honours by a band of six Sheikhs, four men and two boys, playing three 'carnits', two drums (one, presumably of French origin, called a 'tambour'), and miniature cymbals. They belong to Bisru and when not making day or night hideous weave dhurries. Twice a year, too, they bear the village banner in state to the chowpal. No one could say why this was done.

Sanitation ad hoc

The lane by which our cavalcade was conducted through the village was spotlessly clean, and so was the open space where the Meos and others were gathered together for the bank inspection. But when later on, wishing to see the mosque, we chanced to go along another route, we found it littered with rubbish. Worst of all was one of the four chowpals. With its red brick bastions it looked outside like a small fort, but inside like a disused godown. No sweeper could have been there for weeks. The difficulty of keeping the village clean is the small number of sweepers. For one reason or another only two families remain, and they naturally refuse to do all the work on the new lines at the old rates. At first, every one said the whole village was swept out daily. This was clearly absurd and was contradicted by one of the sweepers who happened to be present. He said that only one of the three 'mohallas'[1] was kept clean. In this one each house gave them a cake of bread a day instead of the customary half cake, while in the other two the people refused to pay anything extra.

Manure Pits

There was general agreement that sanitation (*safái*) was a good thing, that the manure was valuable, and that clean surroundings were good for health; but there was sharp division of opinion as to the value of the manure pit. The people of Bisru, whose land is high and dry, approved it to a man; but the Meos of Mubarikpur, some of whom were present, condemned it. They said their land was low and the water-level high, and in the rains the water oozed up from below and spoilt the manure. This is a good example of the danger of trying to improve men in the mass—one man's meat being another man's poison.

The Hissar Bull

A point upon which both villages were agreed was that the Hissar bull did not suit them. Yesterday's objections were repeated, and one hyperbolist said their bull had done Rs. 1,000 worth of damage. The people of Bisru were particularly bitter, for their bull had gone off into the 'jangal' and had never been seen again.

Co-education

I had a look at the lower middle school. I have rarely seen a more disreputable building—its only adornment, pigeon droppings. To educate the new generation—in this case 103 children—in such surroundings is to ensure its being no cleaner than the last. But this seems characteristic of the schools in this part of the district. A few girls were at work with the boys: eleven are on the rolls, and seven or eight attend daily. There was no mistress to teach them. The Meos said they wanted their girls taught, but would like a separate school for them. If this were impossible, they would like at least to have a mistress. And if this too is impossible? 'Then let them read with the boys, but only up to the age of ten, not later.'

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[1] A section of a village.

A Laudator Temporis Acti

Like their fellows elsewhere, these Meos were poorly clad, very docile, and almost entirely illiterate. Yet, as so often before, I found one or two amongst the older men who spoke with clearness, freedom, and force. One of them, an emphatic *laudator temporis acti*, said the Meo had greatly deteriorated in the last twenty years, and his honesty of mind (*neeat*) had become corrupted. This was because expenses had increased and families multiplied. Land revenue, which used to be five annas a bigha, was now four times the amount.[1] The sons of fathers who had been content with a dhoti[2] and chaddar now wind five-rupee puggarees round their heads, put on ten-rupee coats, and replace the dhoti with the more expensive 'pantaloon'.[3] Marriages, which used to cost Rs.100, cost ten or twenty times this amount, and even harvests are not as good as they were. Here a sharp-witted but garrulous member of the new generation broke in and said that the seasons had not changed and were both good and bad as before. A little later, some one mentioned a funeral feast (*káj*) which took place thirty years ago in Bhurtpore and was attended by the whole clan: 'thousands' were present, and no one could say what it had cost; which suggests that also in 'the good old days' money was freely spent.[1]

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[1] These were the figures given: I have not verified them.

[2] The dhoti is a Hindu garment but is commonly worn by the Meos, though they are Muhammadans.

[3] Compare the French word for trousers—*pantalon.*

The Building of a Mosque

'In religion the Meos profess a happy combination of Hinduism and Islam.'[2] The outward and visible sign of this is the wearing of the dhoti. Another link is that earthenware vessels for food may not be used twice, and a curious one that the Brahmin is often employed instead of the barber to carry to the bride's house the letter intimating when the marriage will take place, for which he gets a rupee. The attitude towards untouchables is also the same as that described yesterday. Yet the feeling for Islam is strong enough. Ten years ago one of the three mohallas decided that its mosque was not up to the mark and ought to be improved. Work began accordingly and has continued off and on ever since. Money is collected as it is needed, and each of the 100 houses in the mohalla is assessed to pay its quota. There have been ten levies varying from two to five rupees. Each family pays the same amount and takes it in turn to work. Labour is given free, since the work is done 'for God'. The new building is still unfinished, and I found it was proposed to set up a corrugated iron verandah against the red brick façade. I put in a strong word against this and appealed to the sense of beauty of which I find signs everywhere. In this village, for instance, the zaildar's house had a noble gateway; and just outside it was a small serai, almost perfect in its proportions, and in its simplicity exactly matching its rustic surroundings.

The serai with its adjacent well was built for passing travellers by the Banias of Bisru anxious to secure for themselves a comfortable passage through the next world. Sleeman says that such things are done to earn the prayers and blessings of posterity; but an educated

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[1] Recently in Partabgarh (United Provinces) a cultivator 'was so overjoyed at getting a good crop that he gave a feast to 200 Brahmins on the occasion of a death ceremony' (*U. P. Co-op. Societies Rpt.*, 1928, p. 6).

[2] H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes in the Punjab*, 1919, iii. 84.

Bania with me thinks that consideration for the next world is the stronger motive. Sleeman, however, is entirely right when he says that the countryside owes nearly all its roadside works for the common good to the piety of Banias. 'It would not be too much to say that one half of the great works which embellish and enrich the face of India, in tanks, groves, wells, temples, &c., have been formed by this class of people solely with the view of securing the blessings of mankind by contributing to their happiness in solid and permanent works.'[1] Actually many of these works would have proved more permanent had they been endowed for maintenance. But, for one reason or another, piety or forethought rarely extends to this.

The Sinking of a Well

Both mosque and serai illustrate the power of religion in the village. Yet no religious teaching is given. Not one of the six mullahs—there are as many mosques—understands the Koran, and all they teach the boys of the village is how to read the Arabic text. Very rarely—'after a year, two years, sometimes three'—a maulvi appears from the outside world and preaches. Nevertheless, the duty to one's neighbour is well understood. When a man undertakes some work beyond his resources, the system of 'lás' (already described[2]) is invoked and neighbours come to his assistance. Conspicuous in a field was the brick cylinder of a half-sunk well which was being made in this way. When work is in progress, relays of 50 to 100 villagers turn out daily with a score of bullocks to help in the sinking. Last hot weather this went on for twenty days and was only broken off when other work had to be done. It will be resumed next summer as soon as ordinary work slackens off. A slack season is necessary to make it easy for people to help, and the hot weather is better than the cold, as in the cold the days are short, the water cold, and bullocks weak. All that the helpers get for their labour is a midday meal of rice mixed with spices and gur. Even so, and though the water is only 22 feet down, the well will cost over Rs.1,000. Feeding all who come to help costs a good deal, and the cost is increased by the custom, already mentioned, of never using earthenware vessels for food twice. As every man gets a plate (*damri*) and plates cost Rs.5 per 100, this is an appreciable charge. An earthenware vessel may not be used twice, but an untouchable may be called in as midwife. Could disproportion go further? In Mubarikpur the midwife is a Chamar. In Bisru both are butchers' wives.

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[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 143.

[2] pp. 17 and 116.

Panchayets

As one would expect from the example of the mosque and the well, corporate life amongst the Meos is strong. Disputes of common concern are settled by a panchayet. Meetings are summoned by the Chowdhri or local head of the tribe or clan, and after full debate his word is final. One of these Chowdhris was present and said his title was hereditary and had been conferred on his family by some Bádshah,[1] whose name he had forgotten. His authority ran in twelve villages, and only two days ago there had been a meeting of the panchayet to consider what should be done about an affray over cattle which had strayed into somebody's fields.[2]

Clothes and Beggars

Few in Bisru spin, because hardly any cotton is grown and clothes are easily purchased. I told the Meos of Mr. Gandhi's idea, and asked why they could not make their own clothes when almost unaided they were building a mosque. They shook their heads and said, 'There is no custom to make them.' Beggars are plentiful, especially since the scarcity began. Bisru has twenty and Mubarikpur, a village of seventy-eight houses, four. There are the day-to-day visitors as well, generally five or six in Bisru and sometimes as many as twenty.

[9 MILES]

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[1] King.

[2] The Meos have two kinds of Chowdhri—one who is the head of a pál or section of the tribe, and the other who is head of a got or clan. The tribe is divided into thirteen páls and fifty-three gots (H. A. Rose, *op. cit.* iii. 82).

January 5th. PANHUANA *to* HODAL

The Experiment

Before leaving the district I must try to answer, however inadequately, the question put on entering it—has the Experiment succeeded? To do this I must again differentiate between objects, measures, and methods. The objects all will applaud who have taken as their watchword Sir Horace Plunkett's well-known slogan—Better Farming, Better Business, and Better Living—for they are merely a restatement of this threefold aim in terms of the Indian village. This restatement had positive value, because it emphasized the underlying unity of the many different aspects of rural welfare, a unity which men with departmental minds were in danger of forgetting; and it was made with such earnestness and force that it arrested the attention of many who before had taken little or no interest in the subject.

Many of the measures, also, were good. For example, in the interests of better farming, it was right to try and increase the supply of water and manure, since these are the foundations of agricultural progress. And in the interests of better business, it was equally right to base everything upon co-operation, for the whole modern world now agrees that this is indispensable to the welfare of the peasant. And in the sphere of better living, Mr. Brayne was most wise to make a clean village and an educated woman the alpha and omega of his policy, for in both respects present conditions are deplorable. 'Our villages', says Mr. Gandhi, 'are a dungheap, and streets not walkable in spite of the fact that millions go barefoot.' [1] The application of the Mosaic injunction mentioned above [2] would alone completely change the appearance of most. As to women, all that need be said is that in many districts they are bought and sold by thousands. The most valuable feature of the Experiment was therefore the emphasis laid upon these two points, and the most successful of all the measures was the manure pit, by which it was sought to combine better farming with a clean village. Less successful has been the attempt to educate the women. The starting of a school to train village women as teachers was a step in the right direction and has been appreciated, but co-education has proved too novel an idea for ready acceptance. Ultimately it may be feasible up to the age of ten or eleven, but only when the schoolmaster is thoroughly trusted.

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[1] *Young India.*

[2] p. 69 (note).

As to the other measures, the Persian wheel has met with some success, though many were erected which were subsequently discarded. The Hissar bull, too, is leaving its mark upon the district, but it is also hotly criticized. It would seem as if it was only suited to the irrigated tracts, where heavy work is expected of the bullock and plenty of fodder is available, and that elsewhere the land is too poor to provide enough work, and the people too poor to spare enough food, for large cattle. The two most unsuccessful measures are the Gurgaon plough and the village guide. The plough is not suited to local conditions and is thoroughly unpopular, and at Rs.35 is too expensive for peasants as poor as most of those in Gurgaon. The village guide is also expensive, and at present almost useless. The object in creating him was to be able to send the villager 'people like himself, who look at village life as one big whole and can advise him generally about the many problems of his life',[1] and so save him from the necessity of dealing with the departmental specialist. But the village guide is himself a specialist—a specialist in propaganda. The result, therefore, is to add one more to the many departments already existing for the assistance, and sometimes to the bewilderment, of the villager. Nor are 'middle-pass' and 'middle-fail' men, as most of the guides are, likely to be able to advise the villager about the many problems of his life with much advantage.

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[1] Brayne, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Did it succeed?

Mr. Brayne claims that the Experiment was a success and that 'the Gurgaon scheme is a complete and logical whole, and does provide a satisfactory and practical remedy for the existing state of affairs'.[1] If we are to judge by immediate results, he is right. Pits were dug in thousands, Hissar bulls and Gurgaon ploughs bought in hundreds, and Persian wheels put up in scores. Villages were cleaned and re-cleaned, multitudes attended the annual Palwal fair, large sums were raised for High Schools, and many girls went to school with the boys. Activity was unprecedented, and few who took part in it could resist its contagion—except the peasant, who, being a docile apathetic creature, in nine cases out of ten merely did what he was told. Now, seven months later, all is changed, and the most optimistic estimate is that amongst the peasants themselves not more than one-third of the activity remains. 'We got the district talking and thinking,' says Mr. Brayne.[2] This is true, but the remark of the zemindar who said that 80 per cent have gone to sleep again is probably also true.[3] We have seen that now most of the villages are cleaned up only when an 'officer' is expected round, that most of the Gurgaon ploughs are idle, and that few girls go to school with the boys. We have also seen what strong feeling can be aroused by the Hissar bull, and how lethargically even the manure pit is sometimes regarded. What is this change due to? Partly, of course, to the withdrawal of Mr. Brayne's galvanizing energy and enthusiasm. Partly, too, to the want of funds. The Experiment has proved an expensive business—the last Palwal fair alone cost Rs.40,000—and the district board is bankrupt. But in large measure it is due to the fact that, though official support is still being most generously given, official

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 4. [3] See p. 128.

'influence' is no longer applied. This is an important point and brings me to the methods employed in the Experiment.

Methods These methods were intensive propaganda and the free use of official authority. As has already been noted, the reasons for employing official authority were the uncertain time at Mr. Brayne's disposal and the desire to 'establish a *fait accompli*' before he left. Actually its employment, though mainly responsible for the immediate success of the Experiment, is the chief cause of the ephemeral character of this success. 'The arms of others', says Machiavelli, speaking of David preferring his own simple weapons to Saul's heavy armour, 'either fall from your back, or they weigh you down, or they bind you fast.'[1] In Gurgaon the peasant was pressed to arm himself against the evils that beset him with weapons for which he had little inclination or strength. Being exceedingly docile, he yielded readily enough and did his best to don the whole panoply. As long as pressure remained, he continued to use the arms as best he could, though weighed down by their number and weight. But when it was relaxed, they began slipping from his back. In this country, with a peasantry long accustomed to accept everything from above as an order, and with an army of subordinate officials accustomed more to command than to persuade, almost anything may be achieved by the exertion of official influence, if this is used without stint. But such achievements have no root, for the only sanction behind them is personal authority, which is uncertain in its pressure and changeable in its direction. If it is desired to proceed by order—and the influence of a Deputy Commissioner, if strongly exerted, is inevitably transmuted into orders when it reaches the peasant—the only satisfactory method is legislation, for then orders can be directly given and permanently enforced; nor are the orders dependent upon the will of an official who may be here to-day and gone to-morrow. But if a particular remedy or reform is not a case for legislation—and in the sphere of rural reconstruction few are—the only way to get it permanently adopted is to convince people that it is for their good, and to make them feel this so strongly that they will apply it themselves. In that case the sanction behind it will be either the individual will or the collective force of public opinion expressed through the village community or, it may be, a co-operative society. Every true co-operator knows this in his bones, and to a co-operator the use of official influence as a substitute for persuasion must always appear a mistake.

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[1] *The Prince,* Everyman's Library, p. 110.

Propaganda

But persuasion alone is not sufficient: there must be teaching as well. In Gurgaon this was not given in sufficient measure: too often propaganda was used instead. This word, which is now in the mouth of every politician, journalist, and reformer, is so loosely used that it is made to embrace everything from education to advertisement. Born amidst the demoralizing influences of the war, it is the fruit of an unholy alliance between education and political expediency, and even at its best always retains some trace of its bastard origin—some smack of the false, some hint of the base. Some indeed confuse it with teaching, but there is always a line, however thin, between the two. Teaching keeps her eye on the truth, propaganda on the end. Teaching deals with the individual, propaganda with the mass. And dealing with the individual, teaching can take each man at his best; but dealing with the mass, propaganda cannot go beyond the strength of the weakest. Dealing with the mass, too, the propagandist is always in a hurry, for it is difficult to hold masses together for long. The teacher is content that others should reap where he has sown, but the propagandist would reap as soon as he has sown. The teacher, aware of the complexity of human affairs, tries to make people think things out for themselves; but the propagandist, blind to every view but his own, saves them the trouble of thinking at all by telling them what to think. And to this end he surrounds his victims, so far as he can, with a barrage of fire from cinemas, loud speakers, speeches, lectures, songs, dramas, cartoons, posters, and leaflets, till all thought or reflection becomes impossible; and employing all the arts of the advertiser, he continues to do this till the mind is 'doped' and mesmerized, and sometimes even inflamed, into action. Of teaching we cannot have too much; but of propaganda we can hardly have too little. Judiciously used as a handmaid to teaching and not as its supplanter, propaganda may possibly be of use where only material issues are concerned and uniformity of practice is manifestly both feasible and desirable. But in the Indian village few issues are purely material, and there is such diversity that uniformity is rarely either feasible or desirable. The last few days afford several illustrations of the danger of overlooking this diversity. Manure pits have been dug in villages that do not want them,[1] Hissar bulls given to areas that do not like them, and Gurgaon ploughs and Persian wheels bought by those who do not use them. I incline therefore to think that the free use of propaganda was only less a mistake than the free use of official authority; for, as official authority was made a substitute for persuasion, mass propaganda to a large extent took the place of individual teaching. It is significant that, for want of this teaching and because growth was too fast, the co-operative movement in the district also failed in its first effort.

If I have felt it necessary to criticize the methods employed in the Experiment, it is because there are signs of their being used elsewhere, and I do not think that progress lies that way. It is sought to justify their use in Gurgaon on the ground that it was necessary within a limited space of time, firstly, to demonstrate certain facts, and, secondly, to fix the attention of India on the problem of rural welfare. If one may doubt the success of the first, one can have no doubt as to the success of the second; for, while in Gurgaon the Experiment has suffered partial collapse, outside its influence extends far and wide. So far as this province is concerned, a prominent Akali said to an Indian friend of mine that had Mr. Brayne been sent to the central Punjab instead of to Gurgaon, there would have been no Akáli movement.[1] This may or may not be true, but it is the case that of late years many have felt that, considering the magnitude of the rural problem, Government was not doing enough to improve rural conditions. In Gurgaon itself I have heard it said that whatever mistakes were made, they have been forgotten by the people in their gratitude for the way Mr. and Mrs. Brayne spent themselves in their service. And others too may be grateful for an example which should quicken us all in the service of the peasant.

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[1] A well-informed correspondent writes (October 1929): 'If a pit is filled up and the time for taking the manure to the fields has not arrived, a second pit is not dug and the rubbish and refuse are heaped over the surface of the old pit.' But, he adds, there is now this difference, that the people consider pits useful and use them when an official comes round. There is, however, no spontaneous habit, 'perhaps owing to their indifference or laziness'.

[11 MILES]

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[1] A Sikh peasant movement which in 1921 and 1922 seriously affected the tranquillity of the central Punjab.

VI. JULLUNDUR

Houses, Emigration, and Work

January 6th. PHILLOUR *to* BUNDALA

The Northern Boundary of Hindustan

A night's journey brought me to Phillour and back to the banks of the Sutlej. The Sutlej is the most southerly of the five rivers that have given the Punjab its name,[1] and with its watershed and riverain, which include part of Ambala and most of Ludhiana and Ferozepore, forms the true boundary between the Punjab and Hindustan. Hindustan is pre-eminently the land of Hinduism and the Hindus; but the plains that stretch away to the Jhelum, the most northerly of the five rivers, are predominantly Sikh and Muhammadan, and amongst the peasantry the Hindu is of little importance, except along the foot of the hills. Racially, this peasantry has a closer affinity with the hardy tribes of central Asia than with the Dravidian masses of the Indian peninsula. Larger in stature, lighter in colour, and bolder in feature, they are slower in mind but altogether more martial, enterprising, and virile. Indeed, the Sutlej may almost be regarded as the northern boundary of India.

Jullundur

Jullundur, which I entered to-day, lies immediately to the north of this boundary and is the smallest district in the province.[2] Marching with Hoshiarpur, it closely resembles the Garshankar tahsil; but lying farther away from the hills, it is more typical of the central Punjab and its unending plain. Here the true Punjabi, so simple in his habits and dignified in his bearing, is seen at his best—vigorous, shrewd, and immensely laborious. It would be difficult in India to find either a better cultivator or a better co-operator. The first is due to the fact that his cultivation is largely based upon the well, which gives him a more assured supply of water than if he depended on the canal and makes a much greater demand upon his energy. But holdings are as small as those in Garshankar, and there is not enough land to keep the ever-increasing population alive. As in Garshankar, therefore, large numbers have been driven to seek a living elsewhere—in the army and in government service, in the canal colonies and in many foreign countries. Men have emigrated in thousands, and in 1928, 2,642[1] passports were issued, mostly to Kenya and Fiji. This fact dominates the district, and its effects are profound.[2]

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[1] Punjab means the land of the five rivers.

[2] Area 1,341 square miles, population (1921) 822,544.

Religion

At one o'clock I set off towards Bundála accompanied by the zaildar, who was on a bicycle. I have never been escorted in this way before. The explanation was a boil. Talking of his zail, he said that in his ten Muhammadan villages there was no mullah who understood the Koran, though there might be some who could read it when translated into Urdu. This troubles no one very much, for to the Muhammadan peasant religion is mainly a matter of praying five times a day (in Arabic) and of observing the twenty-eight day Ramzan fast. Another Muhammadan with us thought that in the village about 50 per cent (rather fewer amongst the women) said their prayers, and that nearly all kept the fast, spurred on in many cases by personal rivalry (*rees*). A Sikh observed that the Muhammadan gave much more thought to religion than the Sikh: the Akáli was keen, but most Sikhs are more interested in other concerns.[3] In this, as in some other respects, they resemble the old-fashioned type of Lowland Scot, giving themselves up wholeheartedly to their business and to their religion in turn, but never confounding the two.

Wayfarers

We met a small company of Arains returning to their village from Phillour, where they had been to see the

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[1] This figure was kindly supplied by the Deputy Commissioner.

[2] For a more detailed account of the district see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[3] Cf. p. 34.

Revenue Assistant, hoping to get some of the canal colony land that was being distributed. They had failed in their quest, but took it philosophically and had consoled themselves with a few purchases in the bazaar. One had bought a six-anna slate for his boy; another some cotton seed for his buffalo, and a third a hurricane lamp to hang up at his well when he worked it at night. The lamp was to take the place of the old-fashioned wick in a saucer, which consumed more oil and was at the mercy of every wind. Unfortunately, like almost everything that finds its way into the village from the West, it was much uglier than what it replaced. That, however, it was required at all is characteristic of the district and of its capacity for work. Few such purchases are likely to be made in Gurgaon.

Fireplaces and Dung-cakes

A little farther we came to the village where these Arains lived. It had about 100 houses. Many of them were pukka, and this was mostly the result of forty or fifty men having done well in East Africa and elsewhere. The newest, still without a roof, belonged to a tanner, and a very good one to a carpenter. This one had a fireplace and chimney, but the owner admitted that it was mainly for beauty and adornment (*khubsurati* and *sajáwat*) and only occasionally, as for instance at a marriage, for warmth. The cooking was done in an ordinary chula.[1] There are several other fireplaces in the village, all more decorative than useful. The introduction of the fireplace has not therefore affected the burning of the dung-cake. 'But', said one of the Arains showing us round, 'we know very well the value of manure, only we have nothing else to burn.' To prove that he valued it, he showed us his cattle-shed. Sand is put down every five or six days to catch the droppings of the cattle, after which it is carted out to the fields.[2]

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[1] A fireplace made of mud-plastered earth.

[2] In a number of French farms seen three or four months later practice on this point varied greatly. In one, in Tourraine, the litter was removed twice a day; in another, in Les Landes, only once a year. In this case a thick top-dressing of earth and grass was spread over the old litter once a month.

Sanitation

As in Ambala and Gurgaon, an attempt is being made in this district to 'clean the village'. When we inquired about this, several of the crowd—a large one—said they appreciated it, and the headman duly added that 'orders' were being obeyed, and that the refuse was being piled in heaps forty or fifty yards from the village. When I asked to see them, he tried to lead me in a certain direction; but when I suggested going in another, he strongly demurred. Then, said I, I will not go anywhere, for I see that orders are *not* being obeyed. The general laughter showed this was so.

Women's Work and Men's

A pleasant feature of the houses was the clean uncracked surface of their mud-plastered walls—a great contrast to the villages farther south. The women do the replastering twice a year, and, being Arains, do it well. The Arain woman, not being in pardah, works much harder than the Rajput. The better-to-do get their flour ground at one of the two bullock-driven mills; but all around us agreed that, just as flour ground in this way is better and more nourishing than flour ground by a power mill, so flour ground by hand is better than flour ground by bullocks. Not much is spent upon marriage—about Rs.200 to 250, whether it is a boy or a girl. The Jullundur Arains are thrifty folk—very different in this respect from their cousins in Lahore.

Apart from cultivation, the only work done by men with their hands is occasionally in the evenings to make string (*ban*) for their beds. When I mentioned Mr. Gandhi's idea, they said they would have no time. Except for a few days after a heavy fall of rain in the monsoon, they were busy all the year round; nor was it the custom for men to spin.

Vegetables and Poultry

It is, however, the custom for the Arain to grow

This, indeed, is the common practice in Les Landes, and in a large well-ventilated byre is said not to be injurious to the cattle. A curious result of the repeated top-dressings is that the cattle stand five feet higher up at the end of the year than at the beginning. Subsequently I came across a case of the same thing in Sussex.

vegetables. Yet none are grown in this village, though there are eighteen or twenty wells. They are eaten only when brought out by hawkers from Phillour. Two men keep poultry, but only two or three birds each. The people objected to them on the usual grounds—they eat the young crops and make a mess of the dung-cakes.

Religious Teaching Unlike the villages in the south, though there are many pukka houses, there is only one chowpal, or takia as it is called here, and that consists merely of a brick wall and a tree for shade. It is next door to the mosque, a dignified building of some age. The mullah teaches twenty or thirty children to read the Koran but not to understand it. There is apparently no feeling against co-education, so long, it was said, as the girls are not 'báligh', that is, have not reached the age of puberty.

Village Welcomes The readiness with which people salaam here recalls Garshankar; also the apparent keenness to see us pass by. At one point, half a dozen Rajputs who were at work on their well 100 yards from the road, seeing us approach, started running across the fields to intercept us, and amongst them a lean old greybeard. And at the next village, where there was a bank, thirty or forty members of the society headed by their Khatri vice-President were waiting to have a word with us. But this was nothing to the village of Pasla, where we were received with musical honours. The local band of six—all co-operators—struck up the national anthem, and a large crowd, surging round us, conducted us to the courtyard of the local Post Office, where a handsome shamiana had been erected: all of which took us by surprise, since it was Sunday and no meetings had been anticipated. One of those present was a dealer in musical instruments, most of which he got from Paris. He had provided the band with a 'carnit', a 'tambour', and two horns. The cornet cost Rs.25, the horns Rs.50 each, and the drum Rs.15. The last, in spite of its French name, came from London. There are three banks in the village, which is a large one, and two of them are in class A, which means that they are exceptionally good. The president of one of them, a Sikh, said that his community have organized a committee to keep down expenditure on marriages. These spontaneous organizations, of which I have come across several on this tour, show how strongly the wind is blowing in this direction. It is not a wind that suits the dealer in musical instruments, for it has seriously affected his business. As we departed, there was a repetition of the musical honours, and 'cannon crashers' (*golis*) exploded around us.

The Hissar Bull

About a mile from Bundala a sadhu was waiting outside his shrine to show us the offspring of a cow that had come into his possession some years ago through a traveller having abandoned it when it went lame. He had crossed it again and again with the local Hissar bull, and the calf he showed us was the sixth in succession and a very good-looking beast. The other five he had sold for from fifty to a hundred rupees each, and the owner of one of them told us, with the usual touch of hyperbole, he would not sell it for Rs.1,000. This led to a discussion of the merits of Hissar bulls. The zaildar sang their praises, but one who knows the district well said there was a strong prejudice against them, and the reasons he gave were like those given in Gurgaon. I heard much the same in the Una tahsil, where there are thirty-two. There, in particular, they were said to be too big for the cows, which, however, are unusually small.

Untouchability

Untouchability is by no means dead in this go-ahead district. In a Sikh village which lay on our road, we were told at first that Chamars were treated like anybody else. But when I asked people individually whether they sprinkled themselves with water when they touched a Chamar, they all said they did; and one or two added that, if the contact were close, they would wash their clothes and bathe. The Sikh with us said that to Sikhs Chamars and sweepers were as untouchable as to Hindus, even when they were Sikhs. In the presence of Jats they must sit on the bare ground, and chance contacts with them are followed by lustrations. This is perhaps intelligible, because the Sikhs are half Hindus. More surprising is the fact that the Muhammadan Arains in the first village do exactly the same.

Emigration

In view of the popularity of emigration in the district, I resumed the inquiries begun in Garshankar[1] and asked many what they thought of emigration. Were the results good or bad? In the rustic mind, the idea of good is so closely associated with material good that it is difficult to make the villager understand that results must be measured as much by their effect upon character as upon substance. The effects upon substance are generally good, though in the Arain village it was said that some mortgage their lands to emigrate and, failing to make good, return worse off than when they went. As to character, the general opinion in both villages was that on the whole there was no deterioration, that the returned emigrant was no better no worse than those who stayed behind, and that sometimes he worked harder and more intelligently. But all agreed that, however large the sum brought back, it soon disappeared—usually into a pukka house.

Country and People

This is a pleasant district to ride through, for it is the garden of the Punjab and perhaps the only district in the province where man has mastered nature almost as completely as in England or France. There is hardly an acre which is not cultivated, and well cultivated too; and the country has not the dusty dishevelled appearance which makes most of the Punjab look as if it were the work of some great but wholly inexperienced artist. Moreover, the Daulah Dhar with its snowy rampart is again in sight. In Gurgaon the peasant has little to do at this time of year beyond getting fodder for his cattle; but here sugar-cane is an important crop, and the cultivator is hard at work cutting and pressing it. Working harder, he is better off, especially in the matter of diet. At present he is eating maize (with greens made from the leaves of the rape seed), but he only does this for three or four months in the cold weather. The rest of the year he eats wheat. In Gurgaon he rarely does this.

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[1] See pp. 28 and 32.

Boy Scouts

At Bundala, which we reached at sunset, we were greeted by another band and by the explosion of more cannon crashers. The local High School turned out in force—boy scouts and all. I asked a scout what the scout law was. One of the points mentioned in reply was that a scout must have pity upon all animals. What would you do then, I asked, if you found an old cow suffering from some incurable malady and in great pain? He was a Sikh, and as Sikhs feel much the same as Hindus about the cow, he was puzzled for an answer, for it is a question which has recently set half the Hindu world quarrelling with Mr. Gandhi.[1] While he was hesitating, I heard behind me the solemn voice of the Assistant Scoutmaster: 'Sir, he has not yet done first-aid course!'

[11 MILES]

January 7th. BUNDALA *to* LAHORE *and back*

Summoned to Lahore, I was off in a car before six to catch the Calcutta mail at Jullundur, 25 miles away. Coming to a level crossing, I realized how accidents happen at such places. The near gate was open and the far one closed, and waiting on the line was a bullock cart; and it had to wait some time, as it was only after repeated blowing of our horn that the gatekeeper appeared.

On the way back in the evening I fell into talk with the driver of the car, a Sikh Jat and the joint owner with three brothers of ten or eleven acres in Gurdaspur. It is characteristic of the enterprise of the Sikh Jat that, as this holding is not sufficient to support the four brothers, two have taken up mechanical work and only one stays at home to cultivate: the fourth is still at school. From such as these are recruited half the taxi-drivers of Calcutta. It is also characteristic that only one of the four brothers has married. Asked whether birth control was practised in any form in his village, he replied in some astonishment: 'How can we stop children coming?' This ignorance is characteristic of the Punjab peasant. The need is there, but for most the knowledge is lacking.[1] Is this as it should be? A difficult question to answer, but one that should be considered.

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[1] See p. 371.

January 8th. BUNDALA *to* SAGUNDHI *and back*

Taxation by the People for the People

I started the day by having a look at Bundala, a large village or Kasba of over 4,000 inhabitants. It was founded several hundred years ago by a Jat, from whom most of the four or five hundred Sikh families who live there claim descent; in evidence of which the zaildar, in almost Biblical fashion, repeated the names of his twenty-two ancestors. The village is remarkable for two things—the number and variety of its pukka houses, and the amount of money raised by subscription for objects of public utility. The latter began ten years ago with the paving of one of the six wards (*patti*) into which the townlet is divided at a cost of Rs.8,000, Rs.2,500 of which was contributed by the inhabitants, partly in cash and partly in labour. Since then four more wards have been paved at a cost of Rs.600 to 700 each, all of which has been raised locally. Even the sweepers have spent Rs.100 upon doing the same for their little suburb of 100 houses. They have managed this by putting aside the donations of two rupees which they now receive at each wedding in place of the largesse for which they used to scramble. The pavements have been well and truly laid, but unfortunately they are not well and truly swept, for this is done only every third day. It is perhaps surprising that it should be done so often, since all that the sweepers get for their pains is two annas from each house every six months. There is no Act or by-law behind this payment, but only mutual arrangement. In addition to these pavements, which are all intersected by a drain (full of stagnant water), an awkward dip in a street has been bridged and a Gurdwára built. The bridge cost Rs.500, and for the Gurdwara the 700 Hindu and Sikh houses agreed to a levy of Re.1/5 per house. All these works, except two pavements, have been done in the last five years, which suggests that the people are prepared to tax themselves for something they really want.

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[1] Cf. pp. 38–9.

Doctors

Another example of this was a 'hospital' built by one of the wards at a cost of Rs.1,300. We found a small youth in charge, the hakim being away on a visit, and inside an array of patent medicines, old cigarette tins containing I know not what, and hanging up against the wall a bundle of twigs said to be herbs. We might have been visiting the apothecary's shop in *Romeo and Juliet*, where about the shelves

> A beggarly account of empty boxes,
> Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,
> Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,
> Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.[1]

The people have complete confidence in this apothecary; yet he has had no special training. When I remarked on this, some one said, 'But he has certificates'—apparently testimonials from grateful patients. There are other hakims in the townlet; also ten or twelve quacks who deal in mantras and Koranic spells. But people have not the old faith in these, though there are still some who like to have their children blown upon by a person coming out of a mosque. Though this place is a townlet, for bringing children into the world an untrained midwife belonging to a menial caste is considered good enough. There are three—a fakir, a cobbler's wife, and the usual sweeperess. Similarly, for cattle disease a charm hung across a lane is preferred to inoculation and a vet.

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[1] Act v. i. 45–8.

A Hydrophobia Specialist

But the most remarkable healer in Bundala is a sweeper, with a leg amputated above the knee, who earns his living by working at the local high school and curing hydrophobia. For this he was given a cure by a brother-in-law, a sadhu at Phagwara who had received it from another sadhu, whose disciple (*chela*) he was. It is therefore a remedy hallowed by both time and usage—and also, it seems, by success, for it is claimed that in present hands it has never failed with either man or beast. Several of those present said they had been cured; and one that the mad dog that bit him had also bitten a dozen cattle, of which eight had been treated and saved, and four had not been treated and died. All present corroborated this. It was even asserted that a vegetable-seller and a sweeper had been successfully treated when foaming at the mouth. Though many come to be cured, no charge is made, and every patient is left to give what he likes. Whatever one may think of such cures, it would be a mistake to suppose that they are peculiar to India. As I revise these notes, a French marquis tells me that he can cure people of burns by repeating a prayer which his old nurse taught him before her death and which had been known to her family for generations. Like the sweeper, he claims to have cured a number of bad cases—for instance, a small boy who burnt his face by falling into the fire—and he is by no means either a fanatic or a fool.

Magic

'In Syria and Palestine and Egypt,' says Kinglake, writing nearly a hundred years ago, 'you might as well dispute the efficacy of grass or grain as of magic.'[1] So is it still in the Indian village, of which the following is a good example. A year ago, Bundala was visited by a man who gave out that he was Nathu the weaver, who had disappeared many years back. He explained his long absence by saying that he had been to the holy places of Arabia, where, by the favour of Allah, he had learnt to perform many marvels, chief amongst which was the power to double any sum of money entrusted to him for a sufficient length of time. Curiosity was aroused, and the weavers gave him small sums, an anna or two, to test his power. He doubled them all. Bolder experiments followed, with the same happy result. At length, they gave him larger sums than ever before. A few even gave him pieces of jewellery, over which he claimed the same miraculous power. Every man handed over his treasure in a locked box, of which he retained the key. As the time appointed for opening the boxes approached, Nathu said that to ensure success he must go to the river to bathe and pray; on his return the boxes would be opened, and the result was certain. Off he went upon his holy errand, leaving the boxes behind him. He remained away longer than was expected, but impatience rather than anxiety was felt, for the boxes were of more than sufficient weight. Days passed and the weavers could wait no longer. The boxes were opened and contained not jewels and coin but earth. Needless to say, Nathu was never seen again. The loss amounted to several hundred rupees. This, surprising as it sounds, was not an isolated case, for there have recently been two convictions in the United Provinces for the same trick.

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[1] *Eothen*, ch. viii.

Beggars

Akin to Nathu, but less attractive because more conventional, is the professional beggar. The prosperity of Jullundur attracts him as honey does the fly, and about twenty, sometimes more sometimes less, visit Bundala daily. The only thing to be said for them is that, as in Gurgaon, their curses are less feared than they were, and they must now fill their begging bowls by cajolery or importunity, or by a mixture of both. Then there are fourteen families in Bundala itself who depend upon charity. These at least do something to earn their living, such as looking after a dharmsala, a takia, or a mosque; but in the main they, too, are parasites upon the village.

There is nothing exceptional in this. In a village near Amritsar which was recently surveyed it was found that 244 persons (62 families) out of a total population of 1,795 'do not follow any productive calling and live on charity, begging, and religion',[1] and that many wandered far and wide acting as fortune-tellers, necromancers, and quacks. In all this one is reminded of the rats in Gurgaon. If the latter devour the crops in the field, these human rats are equally voracious of the garnered grain, and, as in the old adage,[2] poor Periwinkle pays for all. He is even at the mercy of the philanthropist, for to-day in a neighbouring village we found a young Brahmin collecting funds for a gowshala in Amritsar.

Modern Houses

I have alluded to the number of pukka houses in Bundala. This is typical of the district, in which there must be more pukka houses than in any other in the province, with the possible exception of Lyallpur. Twenty years ago there were not more than four or five in Bundala, but now I am told there are 400. Those with me said the amount spent upon them must average Rs.3,000 a house. This is probably an exaggeration, but even at half the amount, the total expenditure would be six lakhs (£45,000), a large sum for any group of peasants in so poor a country as India. Nearly all of this had been spent by Sikhs, and most of it is the fruit of emigration abroad. So popular is emigration that between four and five hundred are said to be abroad at this moment.

Vegetables

Seeing a man pushing a barrow laden with vegetables and oranges through the village, I inquired how he came by them. He said he was a fakir by caste and got up every day at four and rode into Phagwara seven miles away, bought his fruit and vegetables, and was back in Bundala by nine, in time no doubt to sell them for the midday meal. The patwari says that about forty cultivators have a merla[1] or two under vegetables for their own consumption, and that altogether fifteen acres are cultivated in this way. The area is not greater, because the distance of the water from the surface—over 50 feet—makes the cultivation of vegetables difficult. The demand is however increasing, and there are now five who sell vegetables as against only two three years ago. The zaildar himself has just started growing cauliflowers. In the old days only onions and beans (*tinda*) used to be grown, but now there are all the usual varieties.

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[1] *Punjab Village Surveys, No. 1, Gaggar Bhana*, 1928, p. 16.

[2] Thumbikin, Thumbikin broke the barn,
Foreman, Foreman stole the corn,
Middleman, Middleman stood and saw,
Thirdman, Thirdman ran awa',
And poor Periwinkle paid for a'.

Poultry

I asked if any one kept poultry. One man had tried on a large scale and in a single year had hatched out, it was said, 1,500 birds; but they were attacked by lice and all but 300 had died. Now he has only 50 birds. I was told of another who, after matriculating and being trained by the poultry expert at Gurdaspur, has set up a hen run outside a neighbouring town. He is a barber by caste, but, after the manner of this country in which all may rise, now claims to be a Kulin Brahmin. Later in the day I met a Chamar on the road carrying an enormous basket. He had just invested in a cock and a hen, and this was to be their lodging. Another Chamar in his village had done the same. They were pioneers, for no one else in the village kept fowls.

Wells

I mentioned just now that the distance of the water from the surface made the cultivation of vegetables in Bundala difficult. In parts of Jullundur irrigation by well is becoming as serious a problem as in Garshankar[2]; for, in the absence of a canal and with a rainfall of only 27 inches (35 in Garshankar), half[3] the cultivation of the district depends upon wells, and the water table is sinking and threatens in time to put many wells out of commission. In Bundala it is already down to 52 feet—the position has been aggravated by a bad monsoon—and if it falls much lower, 149 wells will have to be abandoned. As it is, the great depth imposes a heavy strain upon the bullocks, for the Persian wheel is in common use and from 100 to 120 water-pots are required. In Gurgaon 80 to 100 were even considered too many.[1] Fortunately, in Jullundur, both man and beast are of stronger breed and can do more work, man for his part working almost as readily by night as by day. He is also prepared (as in Garshankar) to make good his losses by sinking new wells. We saw several being sunk yesterday, and in one village we passed the consolidation of holdings had led to the sinking of eighteen.

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[1] 0.006 of an acre.

[2] p. 27.

[3] At the time of the last settlement, which was carried out during the war, 44 per cent of the cultivated area was protected by well irrigation (*Jullundur Settlement Report*, 1918, p. 1). The area has probably increased since.

Indigenous Co-operation

Though the modern tendency is for wells to be owned separately instead of jointly, no one thinks of sinking a well without the help of his neighbours. We came upon a good example of this in Gurgaon,[2] and the same system (called *ábat*) is employed here. When the time comes to sink the shaft, the assistance of forty or fifty men with ten or fifteen bullocks is obtained. They work all day and receive in return three meals of halwa, a concoction of sugar, flour, and ghi. The fact that only one meal is given in Gurgaon is an indication of its lower standard of living. As in the other districts through which we have passed, the 'ábat' system is also employed to help a man cut his harvest, sow his cane, cart his bricks for a new house, and roof the house with earth. There are the other usual forms of indigenous co-operation. Dharmsalas and takias and, of course, drinking wells are managed jointly, and watchmen are employed for the whole year harvest by harvest to look after the crops. Roads, too, are repaired when they become impassable—not before. In regard to this, it was agreed at the meeting of the Sargundhi Banking Union which I attended to-day that it would be a good plan to establish a new custom (*riváj*) and repair them regularly once a year.

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[1] See p. 126.

[2] p. 151.

Village Music

There was a large gathering for the meeting of the Union, and, on arriving, we were almost played off our horses by a welcoming band. This was a most superior affair, for they had not only a large triangle but also a vast horn, which they had got from London at a cost of Rs.120 (£9). I asked the bandmaster (after he had played the national anthem twice in rapid succession) how he was doing these days. 'Not well,' he said, 'for the Sikhs now have bands of their own.' There was loud laughter at this at the expense of the Sikhs, since in this country music is regarded as the occupation of menials! The meeting of the Union took place in a large courtyard completely draped with phulkáris, all home-made and some of them beautiful in colour and design. We discussed many things from deposit rates to dung-cakes, and the talk, which lasted two and a half hours, never flagged for a moment. With the phulkaris around us, it began automatically with the work done by women.

Women's work north and south of the Beas

Jats who live north of the Beas in the Manjha will not give their daughters in marriage to those who live south of it in the Doába and Malwa,[1] for the women of the latter have to sweep up the cattle dung and carry it in baskets on their heads to where it is stacked. In the Manjha, woman loses consideration (*shán*) if she does this, and the work is commonly done by the sweeper. In both areas, however, though not always in the Manjha, the dung is made into cakes by women. But this only pollutes the hands, which can be easily washed, while the other pollutes both dress and person. The latter, too, means less seclusion, and in the northern tract, where Muhammadan influence is stronger, this is discouraged. There are other differences of custom. In the Doaba the Jat women milk the cattle, help to draw the water—the Jhiwars do not always do this—and aid in the sowing. But in the Manjha, all they do in the field is to pick the cotton and take men their meals. It does not follow, however, that they are idle. In the last ten years, as we have seen elsewhere,[1] many different forms of needlework have been finding their way through missionaries and girls' schools into the zenanas of the more educated and prosperous. Round Taran Taran, for instance, in the Amritsar district, many women now not only make the webbing for their beds and dhurries for their floors but also such refinements as table-cloths, pillow-cases, and bedspreads—the last three for state occasions when guests are entertained. They have also learnt to knit jerseys and socks for their children and do much more embroidery than they did. I have quoted Taran Taran, because the other day I happened to meet some one who knew the tahsil well; but members of my staff say that the same is equally true of Ludhiana and Sailkot, particularly of Ludhiana, because in this district the Jat has taken to education and many have gone into civil and military service. With all these new occupations, which however are rather the accomplishments of the few than of the many, the Jat woman of the Manjha may doubtless claim to be sufficiently busy; but she is certainly not as hard-worked as her cousin of the Doaba. Only in Rohtak does she work harder. Yet those present at the meeting would not admit that in the Doaba she had too much to do—probably because they work so hard themselves.

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[1] The Manjha roughly comprises the Lahore and Amritsar districts, the Doaba the country between the Beas and the Sutlej, and the Malwa the country immediately south of the Sutlej.

The day's work in Jullundur

A very experienced member of my staff, who knows all the central districts of the province and Karnal and Ambala as well, says that nowhere do men work so hard as in Jullundur. To-day when I propounded

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[1] pp. 59 and 89.

Mr. Gandhi's idea about spinning, all with one accord said it was impossible, as they had far too much to do. To test this, we picked out five men at random, three Sikhs and two Muhammadans, and asked them what they had done yesterday. The first said he had filled two large pitchers (*mati*) with the juice of the cane before sunrise and six more during the day. This took him till sunset, after which he began turning the juice into gur. This, he added, would continue for another month till all his cane was pressed and turned into gur. The second man, a greybeard of about sixty, said that he had a well (with a charsa) and that he and his family had started irrigating their fields at 5 a.m. and had continued till sunset. The third said much the same. The fourth, a Muhammadan Rajput, had pressed cane also from five in the morning till sunset and had filled nine pitchers with juice. The fifth, a Sheikh, had watered his fodder crop (*senji*[1]) from dawn till dusk. There may be a touch of exaggeration in some of these statements, but yesterday morning on my way to Jullundur, when it was still pitch dark and bitterly cold, I passed a number of peasants on the road with their cattle. One is reminded of the market-gardeners of Belgium who in busy seasons sometimes 'begin at three or four in the morning and continue, with brief interruptions, till eight or nine at night'.[2] Those present to-day said that their only slack month was from the middle of February to the middle of March, and that only, if there had been enough rain. Should the winter rains fail, they have to go on watering the wheat. In the middle of March the sowing of the new cane begins, and this has to be given from twenty to twenty-five waterings during the year. During the monsoon they have to repair their embankments, tie up the cane (if it falls, the rats eat it), and make their nets (*tangar*) for carrying the fodder. 'We have so much work', said a Sikh, 'that we forget to comb our hair.'[1] This is no new phenomenon. In 1892 the settlement officer, Mr. W. E. Purser, wrote:

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[1] *Melitotus parviflora.*

[2] R. S. Rowntree, *Land and Labour, Lessons from Belgium,* 1910, p. 194.

> 'The life of the people, as soon as they cease to be children, is one incessant round of work. In no other district can the work be heavier, and in few is it so unceasing. . . . The cultivator gets up in the morning and at once goes to work. A couple of hours after, his breakfast is brought to him in the field; when he has finished it, he works again till noon, when he returns home to dinner. Before this meal, he usually bathes at a pond or well at the village. Sometimes he does this at breakfast-time at his well in the field. After dinner, work again till sunset; then supper, followed by a gossip at the gate, and then to bed.'[2]

Though the peasant makes his nets, he does not make his baskets, but the Jhiwars make them for him in return either for grain or for twice the quantity of mulberry wood used: in the latter case, they can make as many more baskets for sale. Barter still plays a large part in village economy.

Emigration We had some lively talk about emigration. Emigration, they said, was necessary, not because the land gave them too little work but too little produce (*paidawar*). Nearly all emigrants mortgage their lands before they go and redeem them on their return. Ten or at most twenty per cent do not return, and these are the ones who go to the bad. It was thought that those who came back were the better off for having been away, morally as well as materially. They were less quarrelsome and less easily imposed upon. They appreciated clean surroundings, understood the advantage of telling the truth, and valued education. Many who were illiterate when they went abroad returned able to read and write; and the Sikhs in America were so impressed by the benefits of education that they had recently remitted a lakh (£7,500) for the education of the girls of their community. As cultivators, they often did better than their neighbours, since they could afford good bullocks. But the more critical said they were not up to the work. For six months they might stick to it, but would then get some one else to do it for them and content themselves with supervision. Moreover, they needed their Sunday's rest; also their tea, and they loved this so dearly that they would rather drink it without milk than not drink it at all.

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[1] The Sikh never cuts his hair.

[2] *Jullundur Settlement Report*, 1892, p. 63.

The Pukka House

Every emigrant who returns to his village, if he has money to spare, builds himself a pukka house, and all peasants would do the same if they could. Certainly land and a well come first; but a pukka house is almost as greatly desired, since it needs very little repair and can easily be kept clean: also it is becoming the 'custom' (nearest village equivalent to 'fashion') to have one if possible. No doubt the kachha costs less and is warmer in the cold weather and colder in the hot, but the difference in cost is much less than it used to be. In the old days men were satisfied with kikar[1] and shisham,[2] the trees of the plains that grew around them, but now they prefer blue pine and deodár, the trees of the distant hills. The latter can be bought ready for use, while kikar and shisham have to be sawn up and dressed. It is the old argument of convenience, which has been pressed upon us again and again during this tour in favour of the ready-made clothes of the bazaar. Another advantage of the deodar is that it is less subject to the depredations of the white ant. A retired soldier present said that when he left his village to join the army in 1908 it had only one pukka house: now it has twenty to twenty-five. On the way back to Bundala we passed a village every one or two miles, and all were full of these houses. Contrasted with most other parts of the province, if not of India, the effect was most striking and suggested a totally new standard of living.

Education

There was an appetizing smell of gur in the air as we rode home in the evening. At one point I found a lower middle school drawn up across our path in martial

[1] *Acacia Arabica.*

[2] *Dalbergia Sissu.*

formation and headed by a keen little head master in shorts. Hundreds of boys round here go to school, many on bicycles, but when their schooling is done, the difficulty of finding employment begins. In Bundala there are fourteen or fifteen matriculates who cannot find jobs, and though half of them are peasants' sons, only one cultivates. As in Hoshiarpur, I find general agreement that the 'middle-pass' boy is prepared, if necessary, to return to the fields, but rarely the matriculate.

The Pipal Tree

A little farther on I noticed a peasant lopping a pipal tree for his goats. Remembering what I had heard about the pipal tree in Una and Gurgaon,[1] I asked whether this was allowed. 'He is a Mussalman: a Hindu or a Sikh would not do this,' was the reply. This was doubtless true of the neighbourhood, but would hardly apply to the central Punjab as a whole, for people there have begun to sell the pipal openly, and the poorer use it freely for building purposes. Yet—so intertwined are the old order and the new—a member of my staff was told by a fuel merchant of Batala, a town not far from Amritsar, that he once offered a cultivator Rs.200 for three trees which were dead. The offer was refused, though the sum would have been sufficient to give the owner a pair of strong bullocks or a good milch buffalo. A good example of economics giving way to religion.

[14 MILES]

January 9th. To CHUHEKI *and back*

Emigration

We rode over to Chuheki to see its Banking Union. The usual band was there, and once more we were greeted by the national anthem, which, as played by these local minstrels, reminds one of what an Indian scribe once called it in his account of a royal birthday celebration—'the national anathema'. I was last in Chuheki ten years ago to launch the Union. With its eighty-four member societies, it is now one of the best in the province. The inspection was seasoned with the usual discussion. One of the first topics was emigration. Though at least 100 persons were present, not a single voice was raised against the emigrant. Broadly, they confirmed what was said yesterday. At most 5 per cent fail to return, and only 6 or 7 per cent return empty-handed. The emigrant works harder and more intelligently than the man who has not been abroad, and is thriftier. 'He tells us not to spend so much on our marriages, and is less extravagant himself.' He is usually well behaved and dislikes quarrels, but is frequently forced into them by others. He often cultivates according to the new methods, and last year, so it was said, one got Rs. 1,500 out of 25 acres which he farmed with only the help of a boy. Finally, he wants education for girls as well as boys. In at least three cases emigrants have brought back Australian wives. One marriage ended in separation after prolonged and bitter strife; another in the couple finally settling in Australia; and the third in the wife embracing the religion of her husband, who was a Muhammadan, and adopting Indian dress. She was greatly respected, and on her husband's death her son inherited most of his property.

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[1] See pp. 21 and 132.

Now that the doors of America and Australia are closed, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find openings for the young. I suggested the new canal colonies of Bahawalpur and Bikaner as possible outlets. A Sikh present had recently bought a couple of squares in Bikaner, but some one doubted whether the administration would be good, for it was not the 'Angrezi intizám'—the administration of the English. To this another replied that Sir Somebody Somebody, naming a well-known Punjabi, had purchased land there and would presumably not have done so had there been any doubt. The question of outlets is of importance, for with its increasing population, rising standard of living, and declining water-level, what Jullundur wants more than anything else is land. And in lesser degree the same is true of Hoshiarpur.

Age of Marriage and Pardah

In the morning the head master of a High School had told me that of the 198 boys in the four upper classes, 66 were married and 26 had started living with their wives: the youngest of the latter was 15. These figures are bad enough in all conscience, but at least they are better than those for the school at Kharar.[1] At Chuheki it was agreed that amongst the more advanced a boy, if an Arain, married at 16 to 18, and if a Sikh Jat, at 18 to 21. The corresponding ages for a girl were 13 to 14 for an Arain and 16 for a Jat. But ordinarily a boy marries at 13 to 14, and a girl at 12 to 13. A Rajput marries much later, at 18 or 19 if a boy, and at 16 if a girl. A Rajput who was present said plaintively, 'We get no brides.' Asked why, he replied that the Rajputs had become weak as they did no work. This brought up the subject of pardah. The president of the Union, an Arain, said that only the educated Arains kept pardah, but 'the four-walled pardah' was not prescribed by the Koran. 'It is sufficient if a woman conceals her face with her chaddar and turns her back if a man is near: if this is done, the law is fulfilled.' The Rajputs said that with them pardah was not a matter of religion but of custom. 'It has come to us from our ancestors: how then can we break it?' Actually the poorer amongst them are compelled to break it, for they cannot afford to keep it in all its strictness.[2] Nor are the better-to-do so strict as in Ambala. There a woman drives to the nearest village; but here, if the distance is not too great, she goes on foot.

Religion and Economics—Cattle

There was some animated talk about the way cattle had been treated during the recent scarcity. Most, whether Sikh or Muhammadan, sold their surplus stock to Muhammadan agents acting for the butchers. To guard against possible religious scruples, some of these agents disguised themselves as Hindus and even completed the disguise with a rosary. 'We have become rotten (*gale hue*),' exclaimed one old Sikh. Some of those present said they had decided not to part with animals which they had had for years. Others, less fond but more practical, remarked, 'We must keep the good fodder for the good cattle.' Religion and economics were here in open conflict, a fact that is peculiarly characteristic of the central Punjab at present. Elsewhere, as these pages show,[1] there is also conflict; but where, as in the country along the foot of the hills and south of the Sutlej, Hinduism is dominant, the conflict is for the most part waged in secret, and the issue is still doubtful. In the central Punjab religions are so mixed, population so congested, and the desire for a higher standard of living so strong that economic considerations are likely to prevail over religious. In 1927 an inquiry was made in ten villages belonging to Brahmins, Rajputs, Jats, Sainis, and Labanas, all Hindus, to discover the number of disabled and useless cattle maintained on religious grounds. It was found that not a single bullock was kept which was unfit for work, and that when an animal dropped its yoke, the earliest opportunity was taken to get rid of it. 'The agent to the butcher', wrote the investigator, 'is always at hand to help in the work of removal,' and he added that 'life without vitality or capacity for work has lost all significance for the farmer, be he Brahmin or low-caste Hindu.' The position in regard to the cow is not very different. Though these ten villages contained over 500, only two were found which had given no milk for eighteen months and had shown no signs of calving again, and of the two one was kept by a Muhammadan. It would almost seem as if in this area the sanctity of the cow was in ratio to its milking and breeding capacity. Inquiry at the only gowshala [2] in the Gurdaspur district in the same year showed that only fourteen animals had been received from villages in the last four years. Said the manager: 'It was not so in the old days: the Jats have become butchers, and the villagers now have direct dealings with the slaughter-house.' And he related how one dark night one of the Hindu servants of the gowshala drove two cows to the slaughter-house and explained their absence the next morning by saying they had been stolen from the compound. The attitude towards the Veterinary Department is a further case in point. A generation ago few Hindus would join it, because the work to be done involved operating on the body of the sacred cow. One of those who joined related that for ten years he was boycotted by his community, and that he was only able to marry his daughter when at last he found another Hindu, with a son of suitable age, in the same position as himself. Now there are six Hindus from his tahsil serving in the once accursed department. A minor change pointing in the same direction is that thirty years ago there were few Hindus who did not set aside a portion for their cows before sitting down to a meal; but now in the central Punjab, whatever may be done in Hindu strongholds like Una and Kangra,[1] hardly one in a hundred does this.

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[1] p. 58.

[2] Cf. 'In reality pardah is observed only in well-to-do (Rajput) families. The poor class women go about, but consider it below their dignity even to take breakfast to their husbands in the fields' (*Hoshiarpur A. R.*, 1912, p. 12).

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[1] See pp. 104 and 133.

[2] An almshouse for cattle.

Tobacco The conflict between religion and economics is not confined to cattle, nor to a single community. For Sikhs it arises in connexion with the cultivation of tobacco; for Muhammadans, with the taking of interest. It is characteristic of the hard-headed practicality of the Sikh that his religion absolutely forbids the use of tobacco. In this some may be inclined to see the excessive zeal of the Puritan rather than the restraining wisdom of the moralist; but in some parts of the Punjab the use of the huqqa has become almost a vice. Two years ago inquiry in a Rajput village in Gurdaspur showed that a population of 824 spent Rs.1,200 a year upon tobacco; and it was estimated that if smoking were stopped for twenty-five years, enough would be saved to give the village a small dispensary, a veterinary hospital, and a middle school, and even to pave the village lanes. This probably applies to most Rajput villages, and only recently a Muhammadan Rajput of Jullundur told me that what his village spent every year on tobacco—ten or twelve rupees a family—amounted to 'a second land revenue'. In contrast, a good judge reckons that a Sikh with an average holding saves in tobacco enough to pay his land revenue; and a good deal of time as well, for those who smoke generally take the huqqa with them when they go out to work in the fields. 'Do you smoke?' is a question put by a shrewd Muhammadan contractor when recruiting labour, and if the answer is 'yes', he offers a lower wage than to the non-smoker, knowing well that the output of work will be less. The Sikh prohibition, therefore, is based upon sound common sense. On the other hand, it carries with it a serious disability; for if one may not smoke tobacco, one may also not cultivate it, and it is one of the more paying crops. In the old days, when land was sufficient and no one bothered about the standard of living, this did not matter. But now that population is increasing and standards are rising, most holdings are becoming too small to support their owners in reasonable comfort unless they are intensively cultivated, and for this purpose one of the best crops is tobacco. The Sikh with his keen business flair and desire to get on is becoming increasingly alive to this, and here and there—I could quote examples from five different districts—he is beginning to cultivate it. The Jat usually does this through labourers, perhaps storing the forbidden leaf with a non-Sikh till it can be sold; but in some villages he does everything himself, including even the twisting of the tobacco ropes.

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[1] See p. 20.

Interest

The taking of interest by Muhammadans raises a much larger question, on which there has been much controversy amongst the maulvis. Following Mosaic law, Muhammad forbade the taking of usury (*riba*). The question is, what does this mean? A few interpret the prohibition so strictly that they even refuse to take any part in a co-operative bank, and there have been cases of members withdrawing when they found the bank was going to charge interest on its loans. Others, the large majority, will join a co-operative society but do not approve of professional money-lending. These, however, are mostly those who have no money to lend. Those who are in a more fortunate position will often take no interest in cash, but extort a full quota in service or kind. The simplest way to take it in kind is to secure land in mortgage with possession, and this is freely done. If it is taken in service, the debtor is required to cut his creditor's fodder, milk his cattle, help to cut his crops, and sometimes even to plough his land. Such services are paid for at low rates or are given free. Other money-lenders, a little more scrupulous, differentiate between Hindu and Muhammadan, and take interest from the former but not from the latter. South of the Sutlej, where the Muhammadan peasant is generally a convert from Hinduism, cash is freely taken; though some have qualms—for instance, a retired military officer in Gurgaon, who justified his action by building a mosque out of part of the proceeds. Even in the western Punjab, where Muhammadanism is at its strongest and where most still think it a sin to lend at interest, the Muhammadan landowner who lends money contrives, when he pleases, to get his interest in some roundabout way; and one of them in Mianwali when taken to task asked whether he was not doing his co-religionists a service in lending at 18¾ per cent (*paisa rupiya*) when the Hindu money-lender charged double the amount. In town and townlet the Muhammadan Khoja,[1] also a convert from Hinduism, is notorious for his hard bargains, and recent inquiries suggest that there are as many as 1,000 Muhammadan agriculturists who take interest at anything from 15 to 50 per cent.[1] In the central Punjab, says a Muhammadan Sub-Judge, their number is increasing fast, and there is little to choose between their methods and those of either Sikh or bania. A significant point is that village banks which are predominantly Muhammadan generally make their profits indivisible, but of late many in the central Punjab have altered their by-laws and made them divisible, and some even insisted upon this being done with retrospective effect. Once more economics would seem to be getting the upper hand of religion.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 210 n.

Living on the Land

Another change of importance, the beginnings of which can just be discerned and of which an example was noted in Hoshiarpur,[2] is the tendency for the cultivator to build himself a small house and cattle-shed on his land and keep his cattle there day and night. Generally only one member of the family sleeps there at night, but in a few cases—there are said to be ten at Bundala—the whole family has migrated from the village. The advantages of this are many. There is the saving of labour, for fodder has not to be brought daily from the field to the village, nor manure from the village to the fields. There is the saving of time, which is not wasted in going to and fro for work and meals—an important point in so large a place as Bundala, where some have to walk as much as 2½ miles (two kos) to their land. There is the saving of manure, none of which is lost on the road in the daily coming and going of the cattle between village and field. There is the saving of a watchman to guard the crops, which, as we have seen, is a common enough feature of village life. Last, and certainly not least, there is the saving to health. On his own land a man can easily have the well-ventilated house we found so strongly desired in Hoshiarpur, but in a congested village it is almost impossible. And the village itself will be the cleaner for the cattle being kept outside it. I doubt, indeed, whether there is any country in the world which has clean villages and cattle living in the middle of them.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[2] p. 32.

So much are these advantages appreciated in Bundala that where ten years ago 100 men slept outside the village, there are now said to be 200, and the zaildar says significantly, but with the usual touch of hyperbole, that those who live on their land get double the crop. On our way back from Chuheki we came upon a Sikh, a wisp of a man, who was living on his land, family and all. When asked by a Sikh with me how long he had been doing this, he replied in apologetic, almost trembling tones, that it was only a few months, and added hastily that in the spring they would all go back to the village. He evidently thought we might be displeased at his having left the village without permission, though it was only 300 yards away; and perhaps the very novelty of his action added to his uneasiness on the subject. The incident, trifling in itself, was as eloquent of the fears of the past as of the possibilities of the future. The fears of the present, too, have something to do with the case, for many are deterred from leaving the comparative security of the village by the dread of the cattle-thief and the dacoit. So, no doubt, did men in the West once feel when they first began to emerge from the walled town or the shadow of a protecting castle to live on their land. In all countries and at all times, agricultural progress postulates security and an efficient police.

Consolidation of Holdings by Exchange

Proceeding, we came to a neat little kachha house close to a well and surrounded by a spotless compound with all the dung carefully piled in a corner. No farm in the West could have been more scrupulously clean. Two Sikh brothers were at work and said they kept their cattle there day and night, but only one slept there, because their families lived in the village. By a series of exchanges, privately arranged, they had managed to get all their land round the well instead of having it scattered round the village. In the central Punjab the latter is the normal condition; and as long as it is so, most will prefer to live in the village, which at least provides a central point from which all the scattered fragments, into which the small holding is usually divided, can be more or less conveniently reached. Where fragmentation has not gone very far and the desire to sink a well and live on the land is strong, much may be done by exchange; and this method of dealing with the problem is becoming increasingly popular in Jullundur.[1] To-day two revenue officials told me that many in their circles were consolidating their lands in this way and living on them instead of in the village.

Consolidation by Co-operation

Where land is badly fragmented, some form of organization is necessary to deal with the evil. This is provided by co-operative societies formed expressly for consolidating holdings. There are about 150 of these in Jullundur alone, and in the province as a whole 163,000 acres have been consolidated in seven years.[2] The benefits of consolidation are incalculable. New wells are sunk, and old ones repaired; access is obtained to roadways, and derelict land brought under cultivation; farming becomes more intensive; fruit trees are planted, and litigation diminishes. In a word, real agricultural progress begins. But so many benefits cannot be obtained without great persuasiveness and almost inexhaustible patience on the part of the consolidating staff, for the consent of every member of a society has to be obtained before land can be redistributed, and by withholding his consent a single recalcitrant member may render months of effort futile. The difficulty is sometimes met by leaving out the land of those who object. This was done in one case in Jullundur and was on the point of being put into effect when the two members concerned, realizing at last that their obstruction would be fruitless and that their village was about to receive a benefit in which they would have no part, journeyed the 17 miles from the village to Jullundur, not once but again and again, to petition the staff to draw up a fresh scheme of redistribution. One even offered to submit himself to the penance of a shoe-beating by his wife in the presence of the whole village. The offer was not accepted, but the petition was finally granted on condition that they deposited the cost of working out a new scheme. The two penitents deposited Rs.180 in a bank accordingly. The incident vividly illustrates both the difficulties and the advantages of consolidation.

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[1] Over ten years ago 'a widespread tendency' was noted 'to consolidate holdings for purposes of irrigation by means of mutual exchanges' (*Jullundur Settlement Report*, 1918, p. 3).

[2] The pace at first was very slow, but in 1927–9 114,000 acres were consolidated. The total area consolidated by July 1929 is 212,000 acres.

[11 MILES]

January 10*th*. BUNDALA *to* JULLUNDUR

Manure As we were walking through Bundala this morning the zaildar took out of his pocket a small packet of Chilean nitrate of soda, which he said he was using for the first time on the advice of his son, who had had part of his education at the Lyallpur Agricultural College. He was applying it to one of his fields of wheat which had shown signs of exhaustion. This is not the first time on this tour that I have come across cultivators using this fertilizer; but five years ago it would have been difficult to find a peasant using anything of the kind. Another change of the same kind is that cattle dung is now used as little as possible for fuel, for with more intensive cultivation manure is more and more valued for the fields. Cotton stalks are taking its place, and thanks to a new kind of furnace less fuel is required for making gur. Most of those who attended yesterday's meeting at Chuheki said that dung-cakes were kept entirely for simmering the milk, and that even for this they were not always used.

Building All the way to Jullundur the pukka house was in sight, and passing through a village of 350 houses we were informed by the patwari that ten years ago, when he came there, there were only fifty pukka houses in the village, and that now there were 100. From one to three thousand rupees were spent on them, and on the average about Rs.1,500. In this village a large Gurdwara was being built by the Sikhs at a cost of Rs.3,500, Rs.2,500 of which had been remitted by emigrants from abroad. The remainder had been raised in the village itself by the usual house-to-house levy, and labour was supplied free by each house in turn. This is a further example, of which there have been many on this tour, of the readiness of the peasant to tax himself for a religious purpose.

The Market-gardener

The country through which we passed was for the most part exceedingly well cultivated, and sugar-cane was everywhere being cut or pressed. As we approached Jullundur we entered a veritable market-gardener's paradise; where land rents at Rs.80 an acre and sells for Rs.100 a kanal,[1] where the cultivation of the Arain working for himself or under the control of the Pathan is almost as intensive as that of the peasant round Naples, where the same care is taken by the construction of elaborate screens to protect the more delicate vegetables from frost, and where like the Neapolitan the Arain is able to live with a family of four or five on 2½ acres of land.[2] Man and woman work from dawn till dusk, living frugally and wasting nothing that can be put into the land, least of all the night soil, from which, as in China and Japan, the most fruitful results are obtained. Here at least the Punjab peasant can have little to learn from any agriculturist alive.

At Jullundur I entrained for Lahore, having accomplished my tour in the eastern Punjab.

[16 MILES]

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[1] In Jullundur 10¾ kanals make one acre.

[2] For the Neapolitan see the author's article on 'The Economic Holding' in the *Agricultural Journal of India*, November 1927.

PART II: THE WESTERN PUNJAB

VII. LYALLPUR

The New Standard of Living

January 17*th.* LYALLPUR *to* THIKRANWALA

After six days at Lahore I reached Lyallpur last night by train. This afternoon I set off again on my mare, bound for Multan and the banks of the Indus. We came through one of the richest tracts of the Lyallpur canal colony, which is so famous that it scarcely requires description. Thirty years ago it formed part of the great waste tract that stretched almost from Lahore to the Indus, and was the home of shepherd, nomad, and camel. Now it is the most thriving countryside in the Punjab, and the most prosperous in India. Unfortunately, our road belonged to the old order rather than to the new and was all ridges, ruts, and holes, with now and then stretches of deep sand. A few miles out, in a field just ploughed, we found a large crowd of gaily turbaned villagers gathered to witness a wrestling match between a Sikh and a Muhammadan village. The two protagonists took the field as we passed, one in a red, the other in a yellow loin-cloth, and neither in anything else, and began the accustomed manœuvring amongst the large clods of earth that lay about the fields. Farther on, we came to a big village of Ludhiana Sikhs, which like all canal colony villages had two wide roads intersecting at a well in the middle of the village. The roads were remarkably clean, no doubt because the sweepers had been given land for keeping them so. The well is so deep—the water is 45 feet from the surface—that four watermen are employed by the villagers to draw water for them, and morning and evening they wheel their water-carts from door to door.

Women's Work

The first house we visited belonged to five brothers, who owned two squares (56 acres).[1] Their grandfather had come from Ludhiana in the early days of the colony and been given $1\frac{1}{2}$ squares: the other half square was bought out of savings. 'Living together', they said, 'we can just manage: there is roti for us all—*bas*.'[2] They added, they made their own clothes, otherwise it would be impossible. I mentioned Mr. Gandhi's idea, that the men should spin as well as the women. 'We have no time; even now we must weed the wheat.' A pleasant looking middle-aged woman with all her middle teeth gone was sitting on a string bed, and close by two younger women were spinning. As we approached, the younger veiled their faces with their shawls, then went on spinning. The other, however, joined in the conversation with a cheerful smile. Which work harder, I asked, the men or the women? The men standing by said they did, and the woman did not dispute the fact. When did she get up? 'At five or half-past, while it is still dark.—No, not to grind; few do that now, but to churn. I would not get up so early, but the others (and she nodded to the two who were spinning) are newly wed, and for a time I will not wake them early.' And when do you go to bed? One of the men said the women went at ten or eleven, but the woman corrected him: 'You go at ten or eleven, and we go before you, at eight or nine; but all day we are busy and do not find even an hour for rest.' All agreed that it was too much and that the children could not be looked after. 'But what can we do? The harvests are bad, and we must work hard.' (The last wheat harvest was a failure, and the present cotton crop is almost as bad.)

The work done by the women in the village is exactly the same as that done in Ludhiana: the house and cattle-sheds (all within the same compound) are swept out daily, and the manure carried out of the village in broad shallow baskets poised upon the head.

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[1] In Lyallpur Colony a square consists of 27·8 acres.

[2] That's all: literally, enough.

The only actual field-work done is the picking of the cotton. But there are many household tasks, and now that the sewing machine is coming in (there are five or six in the village—all imported in the last few years), girls are learning to sew. When I asked where they slept, the woman pointed to the bed on which she was sitting in the open porch, and said: 'If we were better off, we would build more rooms, for it is cold sleeping here.'

Possessions The house, which was mainly pukka, had been built ten years ago with the fruits of the high prices following the war and had cost only Rs.2,000, for the five brothers between them had provided all the labour. It was spaciously planned with wide arches and a lofty roof—a rustic but dignified dwelling. Their most costly possession was a large family chest with painted panels, worth Rs.40. Like those that used to be made in Europe in the Middle Ages, it had come in the dowry of a bride.[1] There was also an iron safe, and one of the spinning-wheels was beautifully ornamented and had cost ten or twelve rupees. Apart from these few things, there was nothing to indicate a higher standard of living, except perhaps the large number of miscellaneous vessels. In one room was a pile of maize flour, a rich orange red, as if it had been ground in the sunset. The maize harvest had luckily been good, and for three months (as in Jullundur) they would eat it with greens (*ság*). The rest of the year they eat wheat. A chaff-cutter (price Rs.35) was hard at work in the porch chopping up the heads of the sugar-cane, and close by in the courtyard was an immense wooden trough on six legs, round which the cattle were munching their evening meal. This, they said, they would not have had in Ludhiana, but I saw many in Jullundur. The cattle in the yard were of powerful build and spoke well for the Hissar bull which the district board had given the neighbourhood. They had recently begun pitting their

[1] Cf. p. 101.

manure. I asked why? 'It was the zaildar's order, and it was a good order, for now neither wind nor rain could spoil it.'

A modern House

The newest house in the village belonged to the headman, who, with four squares (111 acres) all to himself, was a wealthy man. He had built it a few years ago at a cost which forced him to borrow, but which he would not divulge. With its 100 feet of frontage, it was pukka outside and kachha within, an arrangement mitigating both cold and heat. The iron girders had come from Karachi and needed their strength, as there was an upper room. The chief store-room for grain was airy and spotlessly clean. In a smaller room was a punkah, the only one in the village. Another small indication of prosperity was the presence of two beds with webbing instead of netted string. The webbing had been made in the zenana and was very dirty. In dress and appearance there was nothing to choose between the owner of four squares and the owners of two.

Doctors

A thing I had never seen in a village before was a signboard informing the world at large that So-and-so was a baid[1] and well versed in the Vedic treatment. He had come from the Ferozepore district and was generally resorted to by the villagers, who, however, went to the hospital a few miles away for surgical treatment. 'And do you like the hospital or the baid best?' 'When the doctor is good we like him: the doctor now is very good indeed.' 'And do you ever go to those who heal with spells?' 'That is now very much less: only the old women believe in them.' Yet when we asked them whether they still hung a spell across the road to drive away cattle disease, they grinned and said they did. 'You have some one to look after your bodies:

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[1] There are two kinds of country doctors: the hakim, generally a Muhammadan, who uses Yunáni methods deriving through the Arabs, from Greece or Ionia (Yunán); and the baid, generally a Hindu or a Sikh, who uses Vedic.

have you any one to look after your souls?' 'We have a Gurdwára, but there is no Granthi. The baid reads the Granth Sahib, and boys who want to learn it go to him.' It was admitted, however, that no real religious teaching was given.

A Sadhu Farther on we saw a bearded sadhu groping his way with a stick past a little one-room house set back from the road. The well close by, evidently sunk for the benefit of travellers, showed that charity had been at work. The sadhu, who was a Khatri and half blind, had lived for many years in Jammu. Wandering forth, as sadhus do, he had come to this neighbourhood and been persuaded by four brothers, who owned the land around us, to settle here. The one-room house had been built for him and the well sunk. 'The drum was beaten and all gathered to help, and on the thirteenth day water was struck.' But after the cold of the Jammu hills, the heat of the plains was too much for his eyes. He lost his sight and journeyed to Moga to see the famous doctor of eyes. The doctor had given him spectacles, and 'now with their help I can see your face, but if I take them off—(and as he spoke he did so)—your face becomes dark'.

The driver of the lorry which brought my kit here says that he usually plies between Lyallpur and Lahore, and that for the 95 miles he charges only Rs.1/8, i. e. a farthing a mile.

[14 MILES]

January 18*th*. HALT.

Sikh Houses I visited another village of Ludhiana Sikhs, and found them enlarging their Gurdwara. They were adding a room for a girls' school and another for a guest chamber. Two masons were employed, and in addition three Sikhs were giving their services free. Following a custom, which appears to be common throughout the Punjab, each house takes it in turn to do this. Nearly every house in the village seemed to have something pukka about it, and several new ones were entirely so. A common feature was the use of corrugated iron for the outer gate with a small inset door just large enough to let a man pass in and out. The gate could thus remain closed, an obstacle to cattle but not to man. We went over two of the pukka houses. The newest belonged to a Sikh, who complained of enemies in the village. They coveted his two squares of land, and he had recently sent a petition to the 'Lat Sahib'[1] about it. His house had cost six or seven thousand rupees, a sum he could afford as he was 'alone' (*akela*). The front of the house was adorned with life-size frescoes of a Sahib and a Memsahib, the latter with a wasp waist and a long skirt concealing all but two microscopic feet. The main room had a chimneyless fireplace, which had been put in entirely for show. Upstairs was a room with a wooden verandah. Here the owner slept in the hot weather. Of his two squares he farmed only one, and let the other to a tenant. Few in the colony farm more than this, and two pairs of bullocks are required for the purpose.

The other house had a railing all round the broad verandah presumably to prevent the cattle from straying on to it from the courtyard in front. On one of the outside walls were two sham windows painted to resemble the three real ones. On the other hand, the fireplace inside had a real chimney. This, however, was never used. The best thing in the room was the cement floor, which was better than any floor I have ever had in a bungalow at Lahore, which, however, is not saying much. One of the rooms had a punkah, and on the walls were two oleographs of angels bearing children to heaven through a shiny sky over a western landscape of village, river, and hill. The Ludhiana Sikhs build their houses on spacious dignified lines and keep them remarkably clean, but they have no idea of orderly internal arrangement. Everything is hugger-mugger, and what might be an attractive dwelling is little better than a godown—the result, perhaps, of the women having too much to do and having to act as sweepers.

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[1] The Governor.

Soldiering During the course of the day I saw a village which had been colonized by Sikh Jats from Amritsar. The Ludhiana Sikhs have no co-operative banks, for few of them are in debt; but here there were two. Over thirty members were present, and they had a remarkable knowledge of the whys and wherefores of their rules of business. Like all good colonists, they had a great deal to say about the insufficiency of their canal water and the excessive amount of their revenue. They were pleased to say they did not want the latter abolished, but it should certainly be reduced. They complained bitterly of the poorness of recent harvests, how the wheat was 'nothing' and the cotton almost as bad. An intelligent, if garrulous, ex-soldier added a complaint about soldiering. Rations, no doubt, were free, but they did not include milk, and they who drank buttermilk (*lassi*) every day at home *must* have milk, which was expensive. Doubtless, too, they did not have to pay for their uniforms, but when they wore their own clothes, these had to be good or they got into trouble. Their pay was only Rs.18 and, after satisfying all their wants, what was there left to send home? Work also had increased—there were three parades a day, and they were always getting in and out of their uniforms: it was better to stay at home. The most significant about this tirade is that a monthly wage of Rs.18, and all found, which is considered good enough elsewhere, makes no appeal to the colonist.[1]

Education Thirty or forty boys were being taught out in the open near where we were sitting, and the master was secretary of one of the societies. We therefore asked about education. There was one matriculate at work in the fields, and he works well—'better than we zemindars, for he knows not only how to cultivate but also how to read. When these two go together at school, the school does not make a boy unfit for the land. But when there is only teaching (*parhai*), a boy will not be able to cultivate.' 'Do not write that down,' said a peasant, seeing my pencil at work: 'we do not want you to prevent our boys getting service.' He apparently feared it might lead to some change in the educational system, which would make it more difficult for their sons to get service.

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[1] Cf. p. 28.

The Standard of Living

And why did they want service? 'Our fathers, when they came here, were given a square each. That is not enough for us, and it will be still less so for our sons. For them there will not be enough to eat.' In 1891 the population of this district was 30,000; thirty years later, nearly a million.[1] Rich as the soil is, pressure is beginning to be felt, and if men continue to multiply, it is only a matter of time before the struggle will be not to raise, but to maintain the standard of living, and Lyallpur will be no better off than any of the congested districts of the central Punjab. The ex-soldier said that if water were sufficient—to them a big 'if'—a family of five could be supported on a third of a square, i.e. on a little over nine acres.[2] No one contested this. Food is much the same as in Jullundur, but work is less. There is no getting up long before dawn to take one's turn at the well, and the only work of any importance at present is the pressing of the sugar-cane and the weeding of the wheat.

An ex-Daffadar of some cavalry regiment began growing cauliflowers two years ago, and this year another Jat started growing potatoes. Most grow a few vegetables for themselves, but all vehemently denied that they could afford meat more than once or twice a month. No one keeps poultry, for the usual reasons—they fouled the dung-cakes and the fodder. As in Jullundur, dung-cakes for fuel are less used than before; partly because the value of manure is better appreciated, but still more because the spread of cotton in the colony has increased the supply of cotton stalks, and these are used instead. Where the peasant is not obliged, through lack of fuel, to burn his manure, he is quite shrewd enough, in most of the Punjab, to keep it for his land. There are five drinking wells, two for the Jats with their sixty houses, two for the menials, who are as numerous, and one for the Hindu shopkeepers, who number about a dozen. By common arrangement the Jats get their water drawn for them by watermen who fill every one's pitcher in turn. Untouchability is much less strong than it was, and all that is left of it is that the sweeper and the Chamar must not sit with the Jats on their matting, but on the ground a little apart. In the old days they had to sit a long way apart, but they have been gradually creeping nearer and nearer.

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[1] In 1891 it was 30,136; in 1921, 979,463 (*Census of India*, 1921, xv, Pt. II, p. 6): about half this increase was probably due to immigration.

[2] Cf. p. 84.

Houses As everywhere else, the pukka house is more popular than the kachha, and the latter was decried on the novel ground that rats burrowed through the walls and spoiled both clothes and sleep. I went over the ex-Daffadar's house, because it was the newest in the village. It had cost him Rs.2,600, of which he had borrowed Rs.600 from his village bank: as usual, the labour had been supplied by the family itself. There were curious signs of western influence: a number of peg-racks; a punkah (there is one other in the village); a pile of chicks flung on one side till the fly season returned; a gaudy assortment of pictures, with unconscious wisdom skied almost out of sight; and a regular larder with a dholy[1] (not the first I have come across), and a number of homegrown cauliflowers. In all the houses I have seen in the colony the kitchen is apart from the rest of the house, and here it was in the open courtyard. The ex-Daffadar has only half a square, but thanks to thrifty ways and to his military service, he has been able to educate a boy sufficiently well for him to get a Government appointment on Rs.125 a month.

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[1] A hanging meat safe.

Sikh Temples

Our talk with the Jats suggested that their condition was wretched in the extreme, but the village was islanded in a sea of wheat and rape (*sarson*) broken only by scattered islets of sugar-cane. 'What does a Jat know of good done to him? What does grain known of the plough?'[1] The proverb might have been coined in a canal colony. Everywhere else one may find gratitude to Government for this or that, but rarely in a colony. Men forget the days not long ago when no plough ran through the soil which now yields abundantly: still less do they realize that, without all that the Sirkar has done by the labour and brains of its canal engineers and colonization officers, most of those under 25 would not be alive at all. In this case, there were two handsome Gurdwaras to attest the wealth as well as the piety of the village. Both were recently built, one at a cost of Rs.7,000 and the other of Rs.7,750, and two were required because the village is divided into two sections (*patti*), neither of which would combine with the other. I went into one of them, after taking off my shoes and handing over my cigarette case to an attendant.[2] It consisted of a spacious room, perhaps forty feet long, in the centre of which sat a man of middle age under a high canopy reading the Granth Sahib, which was as large as a cathedral bible. An ordinary potter's son, he was so absorbed in what he was doing that he did not notice our entrance. The complete absorption of men in their devotions is a much more familiar sight in the East than in the West. All who entered with me bowed themselves to the ground, touching it with their heads. Yet, apart from the canopy and the Granth Sahib, there was nothing in the room to indicate its sanctity. The rafters were painted red, blue, and yellow, and the whitewashed walls were embellished by a painted dado.

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[1] *Jat ki jane gun pun Chola ki jane wah nun.*

[2] Tobacco is forbidden to the Sikh, see p. 184.

Morning and evening, the Jats come here for five or ten minutes' devotion, and the potter's son teaches some of their children to read, if not to understand, the Granth Sahib. The fact that sixty families have spent nearly Rs.15,000 upon their religion in the last two or three years—and this does not include the labour that was given free—suggests that here at least religion is a living thing, though indeed it was not sufficiently living to allow of one building serving the needs of both sections. Incidentally, it also suggests a complete absence of poverty. One thing I regretted: though so much money had been spent, neither building had any beauty of design. The Hindu shopkeepers—Brahmins, Khatris, and Aroras—have built a much more modest temple, but have characteristically set it in a garden. And it is the only garden in the village!

Midwives Though the village has spent so much on bricks and mortar and has both school and factory (a small one with six gins), it has no better midwives than any other village. There are two, the wife of a fakir and the wife of a cobbler. Both are untrained; and curiously, though the village is predominantly Sikh and Hindu, both are Muhammadans.

January 19*th*. THIKRIWALA *to* CHIMRANWALA

Beggars On the march to-day we first talked of beggars, a subject that has been mentioned more than once in this diary.[1] Some one quoted a saying of the Prophet that one who always begs in this world will be reborn on the day of judgement, and there will not be a single piece of flesh on his face. If so, it is a bad look-out for the 600,000 beggars of the Punjab, who in 1921 were nearly four times as numerous as all the public servants and civil employees of the province.[2] Several villages in the colony find them such a nuisance that they have made it a rule that only one beggar should beg at a time, and he must first pay a fee of from one to four annas. His title to beg is secured by a flag, which he receives from the local Better Living society, if there is one, or from a person duly appointed for the purpose. No one else is allowed to beg till the flag is returned, nor may any one give to a beggar without a flag. The effect has been excellent, for the flag is generally kept till the village is sucked dry of its charity for the day, and other beggars, not knowing how long they may have to wait and unwilling to glean where another has reaped, pass on elsewhere. But in one village a serious difficulty has arisen. Ever since the scheme was introduced, the harvests have been bad: first the cotton was poor; then the wheat failed, and now again the cotton is almost as bad. The people, who are Arains from Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, said that God was displeased with them for limiting their alms, and it was all that the more educated villagers could do to persuade them to the contrary. Curious that this should be so in the most progressive of the canal colonies. The Punjab changes less quickly than one supposes.

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[1] pp. 139 and 171.

[2] In 1921 there were 585,186 professional beggars (*Census of India*, 1921, xv. 353).

Fatalism

In one important respect the colony appears to be producing definite change. As in the central Punjab,[1] much less is attributed to fate than before. The people see that a better crop can be grown with good seed, improved implements, and interculture, and that human effort is a real factor in the struggle for existence. The desire for better conditions of life is also growing. The colonist is no longer content with the bare requirements of life as set forth in the two hymns quoted above,[2] but wants a better house and better clothes, and education for his children, and moreover he is prepared to work for them. Members of my staff who know other canal colonies say that much the same is true of them. For instance, the Muhammadans in the Chunian colony of the Lahore district are more self-reliant than those of the surrounding villages, whose cultivation depends mainly upon rain. And even in remote Pakpattan, the youngest of the colonies, change is perceptible since the advent of the canal. The drawback is that the acquisitive spirit is also increasing.

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[1] See p. 37.

[2] p. 36.

Pirs

This change of mind is telling upon the revenues of the pir. In the Lyallpur tahsil, where of old seventy or eighty used to go round collecting the offerings of their clients, not more than ten or fifteen do this now. One of those with me had recently been told by the president of a bank that his pir—and he named a well-known figure—had not visited his village for eight years, though nearly every one in the village was his mureed.[1] On the other hand, he had not long ago visited a village near Lahore which I know well and had come in a car to receive his tribute. It was admitted that in most of Jhang the pir's influence continued unabated.

Landlords

Talk about pirs led naturally to talk about landlords, for in the western Punjab the spiritual influence of the one is only matched by the temporal influence of the other. On the whole those with me give them a bad character. In Lyallpur there are a certain number who are keen on developing their estates: these are mostly the men who live near Lyallpur itself and who have come under the influence of the Agricultural College. One was mentioned as having put 1½ acres under fruit. Another, on the other hand, had sold ten squares and mortgaged fifteen as the result of racing and sending a son and his wife to Europe. The son of a zaildar who came to see me yesterday remarked that while the larger estates were shrinking, those of the smaller yeomen were increasing. The latter was due to hard work and thrift. In his father's zail there were seventeen villages of Ludhiana Sikhs, and few of them were in debt. Nearly all, probably 90 per cent, had chaff-cutters (*toka*) costing Rs.80 or, if of country make, Rs.35 to

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[1] This word, which recurs frequently, means the follower of a pir.

40, and many had Rabi sowing drills costing Rs.50. These were the most popular of the new implements. The Raja plough was not liked, for owing to its length the ploughman cannot get hold of the bullock's tail, by which he steers him round corners.

A Village of Absentee Landlords

Whatever may be thought of the resident landlord, all agree that there is nothing to be said for the absentee; of the truth of which we found an excellent example in a village we chanced to enter on our march. With its broken half-plastered walls, it had the disreputable appearance of the worst Rajput villages of Ambala and Karnal. And it had not a single pukka house. String beds were produced for us, and we sat down by the well in the middle of the village. The patwari appeared, and with him the usual throng of curious villagers, including an Arora shopkeeper or two and an elderly goldsmith and his son. The 65 squares of the village are owned by 11 landlords, of whom only three—a Sial ($4\frac{1}{2}$ squares), a Sikh Jat (2 squares), and an Arora (5 squares)—live in the village. The other eight, 3 Sials, 4 Sikhs, and a Brahmin from Jullundur, are all absentee. Most of the inhabitants are tenants, who have drifted there from different parts of the Punjab—from Jhang, Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur, and Hoshiarpur. None of them cultivates more than a square—50 per cent have only half a square—and all are left to their own devices. Leases are renewed year by year, and though little change is made, a feeling of insecurity prevails; and as half the produce goes to the landlord, no one is well off. Nor is any one helped by his landlord. For loans they have to go to one or other of the three Arora money-lenders who live in the village, and they must pay 18 or 25 per cent (generally the former). No landlord makes any effort to supply them with good seed, and only two of them have chaff-cutters, and one a bar harrow. In marked contrast to the villages of peasant proprietors visited yesterday and the day before, not one of the tenants has either. Improved agriculture in any form is unknown to them, and it is much the same with improved finance. Six months ago some one came to talk to them about a village bank but gave up the idea of starting one, fearing that the bank would have no hold upon mere tenants. I was forcibly reminded of Professor Carver's dictum—'next to war, pestilence, and famine, the worst thing that can happen to a rural community is absentee landlordism'.[1] The patwari said that another of the five villages in his circle was like this; my staff, that the village was typical; and all, that there were worse.

Money-lending The presence of Aroras[2] led to talk about money-lending. Both money-lender and cultivator agreed that the days of extortion (*ziadáti*) and unpaid services (*begár*) were past and that the fortunes of the money-lender were bound up in those of the peasant. 'Things are hard for the zemindar,' said one Arora; 'they are therefore hard for us: he can only repay out of his harvest, and if he has no harvest, he cannot repay at all.' This, it was urged, had been the case the last year or two, since harvests had been consistently poor; and it was corroborated by one of the two goldsmiths. So bad had it been for trade that he had put his money, Rs.2,100, into a lorry; and that was no better, for it also had gone wrong. At the moment it was lying derelict near the well. The sahukar was also suffering from the competition of the agriculturist money-lender. A member of my staff says that in the Lyallpur tahsil alone there are probably 1,000 of the latter.[3]

Jewellery As two goldsmiths were present, we talked about jewellery. It was not bought now, it was said, because a succession of bad harvests had emptied every one's purse. Elsewhere women were wearing less, and two years ago the Kamboh Sikhs[1] all over the district had decided to give it up altogether. Many had sold what they had and were buying land instead, and it was a common sight to see Kamboh women going to a wedding wearing no jewellery at all. Every village in the colony has a goldsmith, and those in Kamboh villages were migrating to the town. The young goldsmith said he was thinking of doing the same. In an adjoining tahsil (Toba Tek Singh) there were fifty Better Living societies, and both the Jats and the Arains, the two predominant tribes, wanted a society in every village to make it easy for them all to carry out their marriages and other ceremonies on economical lines.

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[1] *Principles of Rural Economics*, p. 377.

[2] The great money-lending and trading community of the western Punjab, see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[3] Careful inquiry in thirteen Sikh villages in the tahsil showed 112 agriculturist money-lenders. Since there are 110 Sikh villages and thirty-seven more containing Sikhs as well as Muhammadans, the estimate is probably not excessive, especially as it takes no account of the 114 purely Muhammadan villages.

The Arain Woman

The Arains are a remarkable community and one of the most important in the colony.[2] In Jullundur we came across them as both farmers and market-gardeners.[3] As farmers, they are only surpassed by the Sikh Jat and not always by him;[4] and as market-gardeners, they stand first in the province. This pre-eminence they owe to their infinite capacity for taking pains. This is pithily expressed in the proverb—while there is work the Arains are there, when there is none they disappear.[5] 'Slaves to the wells', one settlement officer calls them.[6] And another says that 'they would prosper where other tribes which are not industrious would starve'.[7] The men almost everywhere work hard, but this is not always the case with the women. What is expected of the latter depends on what the Jats around them expect of theirs. This is because the Arain is of lower status than the

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[1] The Kamboh corresponds in position to the Arain. The Kamboh Sikh is 'equal to the Arain in industry, but is more enterprising and more provident' (Rose, *op. cit.* ii. 445).

[2] For a description of this tribe see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[3] See pp. 162 and 191.

[4] e.g. in Zira, see *Zira A. R.*

[5] *Rain kamman tain, Pichchon shhain main.*

[6] *Zira A. R.*

[7] *Jullundur A. R.*

Jat, and where women are concerned, the lower in rank generally model themselves on the higher. As we have seen,[1] the custom of the Jat in regard to the field-work done by his women varies north and south of the Beas. The same difference holds in respect of the Arain. In Amritsar the Arain woman does little more than pick the cotton; but in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, like the wife of the French and Austrian peasants, she does everything except plough,[2] and helps in the sowing, weeding, and reaping, and also in working the well.

'There is tyranny in this,' said an educated Arain, who was once in the army and now lives in the colony. 'Men make them work hard, as they wish to keep them in subjection. Many times have I seen children running after their mothers in tears, and the mothers could not even lift them up to comfort them, as they had a basket of dung on their heads.' A sterner point of view was expressed by another Arain, also an educated man, who being a very hard worker himself was perhaps not inclined to pity others for having too much to do. 'No doubt', he said, 'they have little time to look after their children, but it is a case of necessity, and it is better that they should work than that their husbands should run into debt. If there were not this necessity, then certainly it would be better for them to work less hard. There is nothing of servitude in this: on the contrary, the woman generally speaks the last word.' He admitted, however, and another Arain present agreed with him, that over 50 per cent were occasionally 'beaten' by their husbands, and from 5 to 10 per cent habitually: 'But the beating was only of the hand, and even when beaten a woman bows to the blows but does not yield.' He was once trying to persuade some colonists to start a society for reducing their expenditure on social ceremonial and received the reply:

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[1] p. 175.

[2] In Les Landes (France) I have seen her even ploughing, but with the wheeled plough only.

'What you say is right, but if we do this who will cook and bring us our roti?' In other words, the women would strike. And once, in another district, they almost did strike, refusing to give up their customary allowance of jewellery unless the men, who were Sikh Jats and hard drinkers, gave up their customary allowance of drink. Though touched at a sensitive point, the men eventually gave way, and the Better Living society that was formed killed two birds with one stone.

Marriage and Polygamy

The Arains would have to work less hard if they were less prolific. Their large families were mainly due to their custom of early marriage, of which we heard in Jullundur. The educated are marrying later, but in most cases girls are still married before puberty, and consummate their marriage when puberty comes, sometimes even before. Boys, however, do not marry till sixteen or seventeen. The soldier Arain has four sons, and as two of them are at college and cost him Rs.100 a month, he naturally complains of the difficulty of maintaining his family on a single square. Had he ever thought of birth control? Yes, he had discussed it, but he believed that all good Muhammadans would regard it as contrary to their religion. A member of my staff said that though it was discussed in town and market, it was hardly known in the village.[1] I mentioned that I had heard of its practice amongst the Sikhs of the central Punjab. For them, said the Arain, the dearth of Sikh girls made marriage such a costly affair that many were led to practice polyandry.[2] His own father, on the other hand, had practised polygamy, and I gathered that it had not been altogether plain-sailing, since his mother was now living with him and not with her husband. My inquiries on this tour suggest that polygamy is rare except in the colonies and amongst the large landowners of the western Punjab. Members of my staff say that in the Lyallpur colony it is more common among Arains than among Muhammadan

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[1] Cf. p. 38.

[2] Cf. p. 40.

Jats, and among Muhammadan than among Sikh Jats. Very broadly it may be said that in an Arain village there will be three with more than one wife, in a Muhammadan Jat village two, and in a Sikh Jat village only one. In the south-western Punjab, the country ahead of us, most big landlords indulge in this doubtful luxury; but in the colony, and still more in the central Punjab, the great shortage of women makes it difficult to get a second wife of the same station as oneself. In Hoshiarpur and Jullundur, holdings are mostly too small to allow of a second wife. Moreover, educated opinion is setting strongly in favour of monogamy.

'The Virtuous Woman'

The Arains do not usually keep pardah, as they cannot afford it. But, again following the custom of a higher caste, in this case the Rajputs, if they can afford it, they tend to keep it. The soldier said that in his house it was observed, partly for religion's sake, and partly from fear. 'Our women are not safe abroad: we have not yet so much education that we can look on a woman unmoved.' Like many other women of whom I have heard on this tour, his wife has of recent years been learning different kinds of needlework. She does crochet-work and makes table-cloths, girdles, and dhurries. Five years ago she bought a sewing machine, and now there are seven or eight in the village. An unusual thing about her is that she is educated in both Arabic and Urdu, and 'it is her delight (*shauq*) to teach the girls of the village to read both'. She also teaches them how to sew and embroider. One other woman in the village teaches girls to read the Koran, but not for love as his wife does.

Religion

The soldier, who was a Muhammadan, thought that more religious teaching was given than before, but it had no effect (*amal nahin*). Very few mullahs understood the Koran even with a translation, and not more than one-third of the boys and girls were taught it. And even those who were taught it derived no benefit, as the teaching was almost entirely confined to reading the Arabic text, which neither teacher nor taught understood. Some general teaching was given in the weekly address at the Friday prayers, but probably not more than 10 per cent of the mullahs did any real preaching. The pir was no better than the mullah, and all he did was to exploit the peasant's ignorance of the next world. From 25 to 33 per cent of the Arains in the colony had now escaped from his clutches. As to prayers, if they were said five times a day in full with all the necessary ablutions, they would take nearly two hours—fifteen minutes for the Fajr prayer at dawn, twenty minutes for the Zohr in the early afternoon, ten for the Asar in the late afternoon, fifteen for the Maghrib or sunset prayer, and about three-quarters of an hour for the Isha prayer at night. Though prayer took so much time, it was useful in providing refreshing interludes in the course of a hard day's work, and incidentally it forced the cultivator to wash, however superficially, since all prayer was preceded by ablution. About 20 per cent both of men and women said the full prayers, and the same number kept the Ramzan Fast, unless it fell in the hot weather, in which case only half as many fasted. The estimate for those who pray is much the same as those given me elsewhere, but for those who fast it is much less. Does this mean that in the colony the peasant is losing his power of endurance?

Communalism and Politics

As elsewhere, there is very little communalism in the village. It blows up a little when there is an election, Jat voting with Jat, Arain with Arain, and Jangli with Jangli,[1] but soon dies away, because villagers are too interdependent to nourish unnecessary feuds for long. There is, of course, plenty of faction, but this turns on personal rivalries and upon a man trying to exalt himself at the expense of a neighbour. Interest in politics, said my soldier friend, was confined to the few who read the papers, and the rest neither knew nor cared about the outside world. An election was regarded as a

[1] The tribe living in the tract in pre-colony days.

nuisance. The peasant voted to help a friend or support his community, but he looked upon it as a day's work lost, for what good did he get from it? Far more important to him than politics is 'guzára'—his means of livelihood. This occupied him body and mind.[1] At present only one or two newspapers came into his village; but, as education spread, more would come and communalism too would spread, since newspapers continually fomented it. As a member of his family had been on the Legislative Council, I asked him how he liked it. He found it, he said, a life of incessant worry, for any one who had a relative to push or an axe to grind pressed him for support and 'sifarish'.[2] Elections, too, were expensive things. So-and-so, and he mentioned the name of a candidate, had spent Rs.10,000 the last time he stood. I should have supposed this an exaggeration, had not another candidate, whom I met elsewhere, not admitted having spent Rs.15,000 (£1,125) upon an unsuccessful contest.

Indigenous Co-operation

Considering the more individualistic conditions of colony life, the number of things done collectively is more than one would expect. The most important is the distribution of water, which is provided for jointly (subject to the approval of the authorities) on the basis of twelve hours per square. The drawing of drinking water from the well is also often a matter of common arrangement (we have come across more than one instance of this). And if a person is building a house, his neighbours will help him to cart and lay the bricks. They will also lend each other things for a wedding. As to work, the colonist does not get up before dawn, unless his turn for water comes at night or he has to do his share of watch and ward (*thikri pahra*) for the village. But in the hot weather, after rain, he frequently ploughs by moonlight. This is apparently the case throughout the central Punjab.

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[1] Cf. p. 106.

[2] There is no precise English equivalent for this very common word which is applied to any recommendation for a favour made by one person on behalf of another, generally quite irrespective of merit.

The Western Punjab

We are now in Jhang, and the fact made itself unpleasantly known to us through the excellent kachha road which we had been following suddenly disappearing under hillocks of sand which spread like a sea to the horizon. In a moment we had passed from the fruitful world of the human will into the sterile world of fate. Not long ago this world dominated the district; but now it survives only here and there, and after a few miles we were back amongst the cheerful works of man and saw around us once more the emerald green of the young wheat and the golden islets of cane. At Chimranwala there came out to meet us men of a new type—tall, thin, and bronzed, with prominent almost aquiline noses, high cheek-bones, and black glossy half-bobbed curls. They would have looked effeminate but for their manly bearing. They were the men of the western Punjab, with their own ways and speech, which derive more from Multan and the Indus than from Lahore and the five rivers.

[20 MILES]

VIII. JHANG

PART I—LANDLORD AND MONEY-LENDER

January 20*th.* CHIMRANWALA *to* BALLOANA

The District We are now well into the western Punjab, a country of wide empty spaces, acrid smells, biting cold, and scorching heat; as ugly as the devil, yet morning and evening completely transfigured by the beauty of the rising and the setting sun. The peasantry, almost to a man, confess themselves the servants of the one true God and of Muhammad his Prophet, but in actual fact they are the servants of landlord, money-lender, and pir. All the way down the Indus from far Hazara in the north to Sind in the south these three dominate men's fortunes; and though they are found in greater or less degree all over the province, nowhere are they so powerful. For the moment we are still in the area watered by the Lyallpur canal system, but we have left that part of it which is colonized with the village-bred peasant proprietors of the central Punjab, and are amongst the original inhabitants of the tract, who have been converted by the inflowing water of the canal from nomads into villagers, and from shepherds into cultivators.

The Old Life and the New The old life of the Bár, as the tract is called, was vividly described at a bank meeting to-day. The members were Kalia Jats and in the old days, like the Beduw of Arabia, moved from pasture to pasture: in the winter, after a good monsoon, settling for a month or two, but in summer ever driven onwards by the effects of the fearful heat. In those days, they said, no one wore a shirt or ate more than twice a day. Those who had camels for hire would get grain to eat as they went from market to market, but those who lived in the Bar had little but milk.[1] In days of drought they scattered far and wide, and a lean old man with skinny arms and a hairy and still shirtless body said that as a boy of fourteen he had journeyed with his father's camels to Ahmedabad—'not far from the sea,' he explained, 'where the islands are.' More than once he had gone to Delhi, thirty stages from here, and he named the route—Rania, Sirsa, Hissar, and Bhiwani. At first I doubted whether he had ever gone beyond, except in the imagination of old age, for he could not remember Ajmer, but after naming several unfamiliar places he suddenly mentioned 'the mount of Abu'. He had carried some trader's merchandise—bájra, sugar, &c. —and for thirty marches had been paid Rs. 14 a camel. At the age of 20 or 22 he had gone with the army to Kandahar, presumably in 1880. This would make him about 70: he himself claimed to be 80, and he looked it. He had no doubt that the old life was best. There was then no borrowing or paying (*na lána na báhna*). Now the land revenue swallows up everything, and all are in debt. (Actually only nine of the bank's fifteen members were in debt.) Before there was plenty of milk: now there is not even water, and therefore no fodder for the cattle. Wants, too, were few, and there was no care (*fikr*). Now men have increased,[1] and the land has grown old. His words roused no countering voice: the villagers were depressed by a succession of poor harvests, and being indifferent husbandmen, they were bewildered by the difficulties of a life for which they had no instinct born of centuries of practice. In Jullundur, when men find themselves without sufficient water, they sink more wells or migrate abroad. Here they know nothing of cultivation by well and rarely migrate. All they could do was to complain without

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[1] Compare Kinglake's description of the desert between Palestine and Egypt

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in 1834: 'The stunted shrub growing at intervals through sand in this part of the desert enables the camel mares to yield a little milk, which furnishes the sole food and drink of their owner and his people' (*Eothen*, ch. xvii).

[1] From 1911–21 the population of the tract increased by 21 per cent (*Lower Chenab Colony Report*, p. 19).

ceasing of the insufficiency of the water supplied by the canal department during the last few years, and Government was roundly charged with bringing about their ruin.

Self-help If less canal water is available than before, there is the compensating advantage that the subsoil water-level is steadily rising and is now only 34 feet from the surface. At this depth wells can be sunk; but only one man, and he was the president of the bank, had preferred action to complaint and done this. Having but little capital of his own, he had done it as economically as possible. To hold the bricks together, he used mud instead of cement; to draw up the water, earthenware pots instead of iron buckets—these would have cost Rs.120 more; and for the well wheels and their supports, he obtained rough-hewn wood from his land. Even so, the well cost him Rs.1,000. The whole thing was a good example of a farmer helping himself, and also of the help he receives when he does this, for the co-operative mortgage bank at Jhang had given him a substantial loan. But he had one advantage over his fellows: he and the three brothers with whom he lives have four squares between them, while most others have only half a square or less, which leaves little margin, except amongst very good cultivators, for an enterprise of this kind. He has made full use of the advantage, for he has followed up the well with a small garden stocked with oranges and mangoes, and has bought two Meston ploughs, a chaff-cutter, and a Kharif drill. He has also introduced Coimbatore cane and allowed the Agricultural Department the use of one of his fields as a demonstration plot. All this would hardly be noticed in Lyallpur, but Jhang is a generation behind the rest of the colony.

Charms As we entered the courtyard of the primary school, where the meeting of the bank was held, a dozen boys, drawn up in line and varying from over five foot at one end to less than three at the other, saluted. Two mites of four years old at the three-foot end were wearing round their necks silver lockets containing tawiz or charms soldered into them. One was afraid of the dark—he would wake up crying—and to take away his fear, a pir had given him a tawiz to wear next his heart. The other had been born sickly, and continuing to ail had been given charm after charm till he had accumulated six, all of which he was wearing. Their combined effect had produced the necessary result, and he was now strong. Some of them had been given him by a revenue official who was present. The latter said that charms were obtained from three sources—the Koran, books of charms, and the charms handed down from father to son; and they were chiefly used to cure bodies that withered, spirits that fretted, and minds that wandered. He used all three, as his fathers had done before him. There were also spells for fever, for casting out jinns, or averting their evil influence, and for both 'muhabat' and 'judai', for winning love and for severing it.

Pirs

He himself had many mureed, who lived as far afield as Multan, Dera Ismail Khan, and Sind, but he had not visited them since 1912. This was now done by his cousin. The old faith in pirs was everywhere strong, but strongest of all in Sind. There, in the old days, they inspired such devotion that a mureed would gather up the ashes of the fire that had warmed his pir overnight and treasure them against the days of illness, when they would be applied to suffering limbs. The members of the bank said they still had faith in charms and in the efficacy of the prayers of their pirs, and if their alms were less than before, it was only because their harvests were bad. Their own pir came of a family whom they had served for six generations. He came once a year and stayed from one to four days. Every one gave him an offering according to his means, no one less than a rupee and few more than five. On the birth or marriage of a son, but not of a daughter (again the characteristic difference!), the offering would be larger, perhaps a buffalo, a bullock, or a horse. In the old nomad days when they had no rupees, they always gave cattle. Some one added that the only change in regard to pirs was that people will now sit on a charpoy in their presence, while before they always sat on the ground.

Murshids

Besides a pir, many peasants have a murshid or spiritual guide, but not all in a village have the same guide. One of their murshids belonged to the Sialkot district, another to Jhelum, a third to Montgomery, and a fourth to Hazara. Only one member of the bank had the same man for both murshid and pir. The murshid visits his followers less frequently than the pir. One, for instance, had visited the village a few months ago after an absence of five or six years. He rode over from Gojra, preached a sermon to three or four hundred people, bade them say their prayers, keep the fast, and refrain from stealing and nautches, and rode away the next morning. The same offerings were made to him as to the pir. I asked if any one paid the zakát.[1] One zemindar said that last year he gave away in charity Rs.60 out of what he had made from a small shop, which he kept in addition to cultivating his half square of land. The president added that he used to pay the zakat, but owing to sinking a well and buying some land he had had nothing over at the end of the year.

Co-education at the Mosque

In addition to murshid and pir there are two mullahs, but only one mosque. One can only read the Arabic text. The other reads Urdu as well after a fashion, and has an Urdu translation of the Koran. His father was mullah to the tribe in the days when the nomad mosque was a bare plot enclosed with branches of the jand[1] and the prickly wild caper. He himself taught both boys and girls to read the Koran. 'Why then should not boys and girls be taught together at school?' 'There are big boys at school, and it is not fitting that they should learn with girls. At the masjid[2] all are young, eight or nine years at most, for usually it does not take more than two years to learn to read the Koran. And the maulvi is a man we trust. We trust the master too,' he hastened to add, for he was sitting amongst them, 'but he may be sent elsewhere to-morrow, and a man we do not trust, or even a Hindu, may come in his place.' There was nothing more to be said. The school houses of these parts are refreshingly clean after those of Gurgaon. The one here had been given to the village by the president of the bank. Village life is full of unostentatious acts of public spirit.

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[1] Every Muhammadan (not a minor) who is free and of sound mind and has the necessary capacity is required by his religion to give a certain proportion of his property every year to those who are unable to support or educate themselves. The proportion varies with the nature of the property. Nothing is assessable on necessities, e. g. on household furniture, nor on stall-fed live stock—for their maintenance involves expenditure—nor in the case of grain, coin, bullion, and ornaments on anything below a certain value. Ornaments in daily use are also thought by some to be exempt. When property is not exempt, generally 2½ per cent of its value has to be given; but for many kinds of property, e. g. corn, cattle, and camels, there is a sliding scale. The zakat is thus a form of capital levy; but it is also analogous to income-tax, for it is primarily assessed on the savings a man has at the end of the year.

Cattle, Cleanliness, and Manure

A feature that the colonist of the central Punjab would do well to copy is the custom of keeping all the cattle away from the village. Every one has a shed on his land, and there he keeps them at night, a member of the family sleeping beside them. The result is a clean village. And there are not even sweepers. There are two or three families of *musallis* or sweepers converted to Islam, but they do not 'sweep'. Another point, possibly connected with the last, is that no dung-cakes are made. In the more congested districts like Jullundur trees are few in proportion to population; but here there is plenty of waste land, and trees, though stunted and scattered, are still numerous. Wood, therefore, is used for everything except simmering the milk, even for the huqqa; and for the milk they bring in from the 'jangal' cattle droppings dried by the sun—a good example of the avoidance of waste. Thus, nearly all the available manure goes into the land, and this is apparently the custom throughout the tahsil. Otherwise, the only sign of 'agricultural progress' is four chaff-cutters.

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[1] *Prosopis spicigera.*

[2] Mosque.

A Jangli House

The conventional signs of colony prosperity are also lacking. In Lyallpur, most villages have at least four or five shops to supply the varied wants of the colonist. But here, though there are from 80 to 100 houses, there are only two shops. There is also not a single pukka house, though several have pukka doorways. But what is far better, and I have hardly seen it since I left Gurdaspur, is that the rooms are beautifully arranged. The earthenware pitchers (*ghare*), for which the Jhang housewives have a passion, are piled upon each other to the perilous height of, it may be, five or six layers. Everything has its appointed place, and in the house of a man with 2½ squares we found seven boxes and trunks and many other possessions carefully stowed away behind two richly coloured rugs, which gave an almost luxurious appearance to the dark windowless room. In this room, with the one and only door bolted, sleep every night three adults and five children: yet it is only 15 feet by 9. The women were hard at work spinning, and after the manner of Jat women living north of the Beas, the only outdoor work they do is to pick the cotton and take the men their meals.

Seyyeds and Piri-mureedi

Farther on, we stopped at a village of Seyyeds where we looked at the bank, a miserable affair of nineteen members who owed nearly Rs.16,000. All were pirs and did piri-mureedi,[1] and half their time is wasted in collecting alms from their widely scattered followers. After hearing the usual complaint about the lack of water and the poorness of the harvests, I told them that they would never get straight till they gave up doing piri-mureedi. 'No doubt', said one of them, 'piri-mureedi is bad, but it is our custom and we cannot give it up.' Fortified by this unexpected admission, I drew a contrast between them and the first village, where no piri-mureedi was done and debt was only Rs.1,600. They replied with a vehement exposition of the doctrine of kismet, explaining at length how their miserable state was every one's fault but their own. Even in the first bank members had only the vaguest idea of what the bank was about and how it worked. Here they had no idea at all—a very different state of affairs from what I found in Jullundur and Lyallpur. There was a newly-established veterinary dispensary in the village. The people were glad to have this, but admitted that when their cattle fell ill, they preferred to drive them under a charm hung across the entrance to the village. The veterinary assistant, however, was useful for mending a broken limb.

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[1] Literally, to play the part of pir to mureeds, i.e. to tour and collect alms from followers in return for charms.

[6 MILES]

January 21*st.* BALLOANA *to* JHANG

A 'Criminal Tribe'

We visited to-day a village belonging to peasants who are officially described as members of a criminal tribe. They describe themselves as 'khandáni Biloch'—Biloch of good family—and complained bitterly of the official description.[1] 'We have lived in Jhang for seven generations, and when people speak of us as a criminal tribe, shame fills our hearts.' A fellow of forty was more explicit: 'I was employed by the police at —— (in another district) as a tracker, and though I was a head constable on Rs.25 a month, a constable on Rs.17 told me to carry his bedding as if I were a cooli: "You belong to a criminal tribe," he said. My izzat was gone, and I resigned. We are not Sansis[2] or vagabonds (*khána badosh*[3]) that we should be called this: our tribe is one of old standing (*khandáni*). In the war we gave

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[1] 'In the greater part of the Punjab the word Biloch is used for any Musalman camel-man whatever be his caste, every Biloch being supposed to be a camel-man and every Musalman camel-man to be a Biloch' (Rose, *op. cit.*, ii. 41).

[2] A well-known criminal tribe.

[3] Literally, carrying one's house on one's back.

100 recruits, and we were ready to have our throats cut for the Sirkar. We came back, and many of us have been sent to the reformatory at Amritsar.' He had been under surveillance there for four years, and was now visiting his village on twenty days' leave. He spoke as one emboldened by innocence, but there was a gentle laugh at his expense when a question elicited the fact that he had had a seven-year sentence in 1905. I was subsequently informed on excellent authority that the Bilochis of this village were first-class cattle-thieves, bringing to their work the spirit of the sportsman and the skill of the artist. My informant was prepared to wager that they would steal any horse I liked to name in Lahore within twenty-four hours. Having for the moment no old scores to pay off, I declined the offer.

Education

The village itself did not suggest the abode of professional thieves. Not only was there a bank, but schools for both girls and boys. Compulsory education had just been introduced for the boys, but so far without much effect. Did they want education? There was a chorus of assent, and when I asked—why? they replied with unexpected good sense: 'That our boys may get service and be able to read the sahukar's accounts and the Koran shareef.'[1] A sensible feature of the school was half a kanal of land prepared by the boys for the sowing of vegetables.

A Girls' School

The girls' school was in the hands of the head-master's wife—a happy arrangement. There were more girls on the rolls than boys, and though our visit to the school was not expected, 42 out of 54 were present. The head master and his wife come from a town, and there were signs that the girls were being taught what was more suitable for the town than the village. The lessons in cooking, sewing, and washing were all to the good; but I doubted the advantage of teaching the girls to make table-cloths and bibs, and lace and woollen scarves, the latter of the most outrageous colours, when they might be learning to embroider their own clothes and make webbing for their beds, girdles (*azarband*) for their husbands, baskets for their work, and chicks and matting for their houses. All these things are, or might usefully become, part and parcel of their simple village life.

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[1] The holy Koran.

A Village Pir

If the girls' school represented the new world, there was plenty in the village to represent the old. The most typical was a pir who had come from the Lyallpur district to collect his annual offerings from the village and the other Biloch villages of the neighbourhood. He had been there since September and the whole time had victualled free. He had no leanness of sanctity but the slightly corpulent appearance of a stud bull. 'How did pirs fare nowadays?' I asked. His reply was characteristic of a land of wide rivers often in flood. 'There was everywhere great faith (*siddh*) and much religion (*imándári*), and the boats of those whose faith was good came safely to shore.' He had, indeed, no fault to find with the times. In this village it is the custom, as each channel runs in turn with the precious canal water, to give six hours' watering to the land set aside for his maintenance, and since there are five channels (each runs in turn for fourteen days) the yield is considerable. And he does not even have to cultivate: this is done by his followers, who also provide the seed and pay the land revenue. It was to collect his share of the grain and cotton of the autumn harvest that he had come here. Not every village has made this arrangement: some pay a fixed amount of grain, and others cash. But, as in their dealings with the money-lender, they prefer payments in grain.

Easy Credit

No money-lender was present, but his mark was upon almost every villager. In the old pre-canal days there was no great load of debt, for all the credit that a nomad could get was a loan of seven rupees for every camel born to him. This he would borrow to pay his grazing fee to Government. In return he gave the money-lender the camel, but kept it for him till it was three years old and able to work. He then handed it over in payment of the debt; or if, by unhappy chance, it had died or been stolen, his account would be debited with the seven rupees plus compound interest. Now the dealings are not in single rupees, but in scores. Twenty-seven out of the thirty-eight members of the bank owed over Rs.18,000, and one with no more than a square owed Rs.3,000. When I inquired the cause of so much debt, the only answer I could get was that it had been incurred 'to fill our bellies' (*pet waste*), and had grown and grown through compound interest: also, so it was alleged, there had been cheating on the part of the money-lender. The village illustrates the danger of putting money into the hands of those who do not know how to use it, and in truth the gift of land and water has hung a millstone round their foolish necks. It is difficult now to know how to get the more indebted straight. 'Give us water,' they said, 'and we will pay everything.' But the only way more water can be got is by sinking wells, and for this, they lamented, 'we have no pence' (*paisa*).

Water and Wells

Wherever we go there is an insistent demand for more water, and a bitter complaint that the supply is less than it was. As we rode through this village, two tall women seeing us pass struck statuesque attitudes, and, fixing modest eyes upon the ground but raising most immodest voices, protested shrilly that they and their children must surely die if no more water were given. This is the invariable complaint of those who live at the tail of a canal, and with a 26-foot water-level the obvious remedy is to sink wells. Where men are enterprising and, as the zaildar put it, cultivators bred in the village (*dihâti zamindar*), this is freely done, and in the zaildar's own village thirty-eight have been sunk. But where, as in yesterday's country and to-day's, the people are rather sons of nomads than children of the village, they have not 'the custom of the well'. Yet even amongst them, the more prudent and enterprising are applying the remedy, and in this village four have been sunk at a cost of thirteen or fourteen hundred rupees each.

A Demonstration Plot

As in the Jat village seen yesterday, the Bilochis keep their cattle on the land, and those who have wells generally live near them with their families. This should make for good agriculture, but methods of cultivation are still primitive enough. A new spirit, however, is quickening, and questions about the results of the two demonstration plots initiated by the Agricultural Department last year produced an almost fiery altercation between the advocates and the opponents of the experiment. Some said the plots had produced an extra maund of produce per acre; but others asserted that it was due to good land having been chosen for the plots, and that when bad land had been taken, the outturn had been much less. The theme proved so provocative that we had hastily to turn to other things.

A remarkable House

In the village I found by chance a most remarkable house, the property of a man who, with 1½ squares and only four mouths to feed, was well off. Entirely pukka, it consisted of a single room—really a guest-chamber—with a broad mud-plastered terrace in front so immaculately clean that for a moment I hesitated to cross it. The room was as spotless and contained the greatest variety of possessions, all arranged with taste and many showing a feeling for beauty. At one end were two rows of pitchers (*ghare*), twenty in front and fifteen behind, all piled atop of each other, and of a deep reddish brown tinged with purple, and pleasantly patterned. The owner found them in a neighbouring village and paid six annas apiece for them. At the other end of the room was a magnificent kajáwa[1] of polished shisham wood studded with brass disks. This was covered by a rug of gay colours bought at Kemália for sixty rupees. Against the main wall was an extraordinary array of beds with red painted posts, wooden stools with drawers (each with a tiny mirror), and eight or nine boxes or trunks; and above were two shelves with every kind of brass vessel, as bright and as orderly as the pots and pans of the most careful cottage housewife in England. But the English housewife would not have thought of keeping the two empty paint-tins which came at the end of the row and looked completely in place, for their faces had been painted with a pretty flowery pattern quite disguising their origin. To one side were more beds and a collection of bolsters and quilts, the quilts blue and yellow and bought at Multan. Above, supported by green-painted girders from Karachi, was a highly decorated roof, in the middle of which had been set a large mirror. But there was no window of any kind—only the door. I asked, why? 'We were afraid of the dust getting in when the wind blew and spoiling these things,' a reply that recalled London houses with windows closed to keep out the soot of surrounding chimneys. The house had cost only Rs.800, and the contents were valued, modestly enough, at Rs.600. I asked the owner whether he paid the zakát. He said a little penitently that he had not, but he had given the pir his dues.

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[1] A wooden framework consisting of two large crates or panniers for carrying people and their goods and chattels on a camel.

[15 MILES]

January 22*nd*. HALT

Central and Mortgage Banks

To-day I inspected the local central and mortgage banks, both co-operative societies. The former is one of the forty-six central banks in the province, whose main function is to finance the village banks within their area (generally a district) by attracting deposits from both within and without the movement. Last year they had obtained nearly five crores (over £3,500,000) in this way, and had besides over 50 lakhs of owned capital.[1] This particular bank is in a bad way for the moment, for it has just lost Rs.50,000: a cheque for this amount was sent to the local Treasury to be cashed, and some one got away with the money. The mortgage bank resembles the one described at Naraingarh,[1] but whereas the Naraingarh bank is the youngest in the province, this is the oldest, for it was founded in 1921. The difference is painfully apparent. Many defects have appeared, and last summer, when the spring harvest failed, 112 out of 216 borrowers paid neither principal nor interest. Threatened with proceedings, many have paid up since; among them a pir who, to meet the demand, went out on tour amongst his mureeds and returned with sixty buffaloes, selling which he cleared his debt. No one could doubt the need for a mortgage bank in the district, which is heavily burdened with debt; but it is difficult to make it a success, for character and education are not sufficiently developed to ensure the wise application of a loan or its punctual repayment. The bank, too, has been at greater pains to help the landlord rather than the more industrious peasant proprietor, with the result that loans have been imprudently large: last year they averaged Rs.3,852. Another source of weakness is that it operates over the whole district. This is too large an area for a mortgage bank run on co-operative lines, and most of the banks founded since have been confined to a single tahsil.

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[1] *Report of the Working of Co-operative Societies in the Punjab*, 1928, p. 13.

Landlords

In the districts so far traversed, the dominating element has been the peasant proprietor, but in Jhang it is the landlord. There are over seventy who pay more than Rs.1,000 in land revenue, and one pays nearly Rs.7,000.[2] Few amongst them seem to take any thought for the development of their land or the good of their tenants. The chief assistance given to tenants is protection from the cattle-thief. For this purpose many landlords, it is said, keep in touch with the principal thieves, so that when cattle are stolen they may be in a position to arrange matters, either by obtaining the return of the stolen beast or by securing an equivalent in exchange. And keeping in touch, many find it convenient to take a share, if not in the game, at least in the spoils. This assistance the tenant no doubt appreciates, but the financial assistance of an interest-free loan in time of need he cannot usually expect, because most of the large landowners are in debt. 'Large holdings', writes the settlement officer, 'with a few praiseworthy exceptions mean one thing, and only one thing, large debts.'[1] These are incurred in a variety of ways. The chief is the very high standard of expenditure on marriages and funerals. In the Shorkot tahsil, it is the custom to keep open house for all who come to condole for six months after a person's death. There is also the extensive hospitality practised at all times. This has led to the keeping of large herds of more or less superfluous cattle, in order that, whatever the occasion or the emergency, there may always be a sufficiency of meat, milk, and ghi. And in the old pastoral days, when few had cash, a large herd of cattle was as much prized as a large balance at the bank is now. The custom has therefore been invested with the sanctity of tradition, and it has become a point of family honour not to reduce the number of a herd, much as it was with our fathers not to touch the family capital; and recently, when a big landlord auctioned his superfluous cattle, many of his neighbours asked how he could bring himself to sell the cattle of his dead father. Another common source of debt is the habit of careless living that comes readily enough to those who have little or nothing to do, especially in a climate which counsels ease rather than effort. And when there is not positive dissipation, there is much foolish expenditure upon hawks, greyhounds, and shikár.[2] Thousands of rupees are sometimes spent upon the last. A wise landlord would busy himself with his estate, but nearly all leave this to their agents, who often fleece their masters and oppress the tenants. Curiously, many Muhammadans have Hindu agents, and after the manner of the country, the office normally passed from father to son. One or two landlords keep accounts, but nearly all leave it to their agents.

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[1] p. 80.

[2] Broadly, in the Punjab, 'the land revenue demand absorbs about one-fifth of the net income of the land' (the author's *op. cit.*, p. 10).

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[1] *Jhang A. R.*, 1925, p. 18.

[2] Any form of hunting or shooting.

If, however, most landlords leave much to be desired, there are conspicuous examples of the contrary. One of these, the leader of the Bhatti Rajputs, is the president of an excellent bank, a keen advocate of education and improved agriculture, one of the best co-operators in the district, and, in significant phrase, 'a man who does not steal'. Inspired by his example, ten or twelve of the larger landowners of the clan have got out of debt and are doing something to help their tenants. A good landlord helps his tenants much as a good village bank helps its members. When they are in financial difficulties, he gives them loans free of interest; and when their cattle die, finds them other cattle in their place. He makes it possible for them to marry and perform their funeral ceremonies, settles their quarrels, and protects them from those who molest them. Owing to the influence of the Bhatti chief and to the spread of co-operation, there is now hardly a money-lender in the thirty or forty villages of the clan—a big change in a tract where the money-lender had made himself indispensable. To check the heavy expenditure on marriages and funerals, Better Living societies are being formed; and I was told of a zaildar who kept the expenditure of the death of his mother down to a few hundred rupees by stopping the entertainment of guests after the fifth day. In marrying his daughter, too, he restricted the bridegroom's party (*barát*) to thirty, and the dowry of clothes, vessels, and jewellery to Rs.200. To console the bride for the small quantity of jewellery, he gave her nearly 2 acres (2 ghumaon). I heard of another landlord who is setting a new standard of economy for his household. Instead of following custom and allowing his servants to take as much grain as they please from the household store, he has fixed a daily limit of one pound per man and of two pounds per guest. In short, there are signs of awakening amongst the landlords of the district.

The Arora Proprietor

What has been said above relates only to the Muhammadan landlord. The Hindu landowner is numerically much less important, but as proprietor and farmer much more satisfactory. The Shorkot tahsil, where Hindus own 64,000 acres, is described by the settlement officer as 'fortunate in its Hindu proprietory element';[1] and in the Jhang tahsil, where they own over 100,000 acres, they are said to be 'the most industrious as well as the most capable of all the proprietors', and 'even when they cultivate with their own hands, make much better use of the soil than do their Muhammadan neighbours'.[2] Most of these proprietors are Aroras, a community better known as traders and money-lenders than as farmers; but industry and capacity tell in farming as in everything else. Another advantage they have is that they do not depend solely upon agriculture, but supplement it by money-lending or shopkeeping, or by both. As village money-lenders, they have not a good reputation, and I was informed to-day on the best authority that the police had recently impounded a number of their account books with borrowers' thumbmarks on blank pages, which to some extent bears out what was said against them yesterday. On the other hand, the settlement officer writes: 'There is no doubt that, in so far as money is concerned, . . . the existence of the bania, in spite of his charging exorbitant interest, is a real boon to some of these people.'[3]

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[1] *Shorkot A. R.*, 1926, p. 15.

[2] *Jhang A. R.*, 1925, p. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

PART II—THE PIR

January 23*rd*. JHANG *to* HAVELI BEHADUR SHAH

The Country

The road along which we rode to-day is the western boundary of the colony, and it is also the boundary which divides the world of villages from the world of hamlets, in which each man lives on his own well. Without the well, cultivation would be difficult, if not impossible, as the rainfall is only ten inches. So low a rainfall produces the ugliest type of landscape—the abomination of desolation intermediate between cultivation and desert, without the attraction of the one or the character of the other. There is growth rather than grass, patches rather than fields, scrub rather than shrub, stumps rather than trees. The earth is not bare, yet it is not clothed: it has neither the primitiveness of nudity, nor the beauty of vesture. There are undulations, but no landmarks. The very hillocks, with their sites of forgotten villages, recall not the living but the dead; and their arid surfaces, sprinkled with the half-powdered bricks of the past, suggest at once the sterility of nature and the futility of man. The road started with an avenue of trees, but the stunted shishams soon gave way to clay and sand. Then all that was left to please the eye was the emerald green of the scattered plots of wheat, and an occasional stretch of elephant grass, a reminder that the Chenab and Jhelum joined their forces not far away.

Pirs

We met two pirs on the road. One had come out from his village to speed on their way a Biloch and his handsome sharp-featured wife, who had brought him their little child, smitten by dysentery, to be rubbed with the dust of the shrine he served. Would this really be effective? asked the doubting westerner. 'If', said the mother in almost Biblical phrase, 'faith is strong, God will fulfil our purpose.' This family had come forty miles on the wings of their faith. The pir was himself suffering from some complaint, but with more faith in medicine than in dust was planning to visit a doctor.

We next met an aged little man on an aged little pony led by a stalwart attendant. He, too, was a pir and was returning from a visit to his mureeds. A Rawal or astrologer by caste, he admitted with a laugh that he sometimes did a little palmistry, but his real work was to cure children by giving them charms. He lamented the change in the times and said that faith was dead. The head of a gang of coolies at work on the road, joining in, attributed this, with unexpected intelligence, to the spread of education.

That there is change was borne out later by the Qureshis of Haveli Behadur Shah. Their spokesman, whom we may call the Shah Sahib, said that in his youth—he is now about 60—all used to bow their heads in the presence of a pir, and a pir had only to express a wish for it to be gratified at once. But now the days of oppression (*sakhti*) are over, and a pir (like the beggars we heard of in Jullundur[1]) must coax what he wants out of people. Even so, he does not do badly. The fifteen or twenty Qureshi[2] families here give their pir, who lives in Montgomery, four or five hundred rupees whenever he visits them, which he does every four or five years, and Rs.100 to Rs.150 to his nephew who comes every year. The Shah Sahib says that, owing to education, the belief in charms and spells is much less than it was. Yet there is a Brahmin here who trades in mantras; and when rinderpest comes, though there is a veterinary hospital, no one thinks of doing anything but drive the cattle under a charm slung across the entrance to the village.

An educated Farmer

The Shah Sahib is a remarkable man, a zemindar who was at college in the nineties and has looked after his lands ever since. With his nine squares (about 250 acres) he is now a substantial landowner and one of the few good ones of the district. He belongs to a type which is far too rare in the province—the educated landowner who lives in the village—and he is only the second I have met on my wanderings. One can see that he is a man of character: his look is as straight as his figure, and his reddish-brown square-cut face shows a man accustomed to direct. He has been elected president of a Better Living society which the Qureshis have started to reduce their heavy expenditure on marriages and funerals. I asked him what he thought the peasants needed most of all. 'Education,' he said; 'give them that and everything else—sanitation, better farming, &c., will follow automatically.' To an inquiry why the Hindus of these parts were much better cultivators than the Muhammadans, he replied that it was largely a matter of capital. The Hindus lent to each other at as low a rate as 3 per cent, while a Muhammadan cultivator could not borrow at less than 12 per cent and might have to pay much more. He thought that the influence of the money-lender had declined less than that of the pir. A sign, however, that the former is feeling insecure is that eighteen months ago certain money-lenders of Lyallpur, Montgomery, and Jhang formed an organization (with a magazine) to protect their interests.

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[1] p. 171.

[2] The tribe to which the Prophet belonged, 'said to mean trader': comparatively few are really of the Prophet's tribe (Rose, *op. cit.* iii. 260).

A Townlet

Haveli Behadur Shah with its 3,000 inhabitants, though full of pukka houses, is without amenity. The lanes, like those of every other townlet I have been in on this tour, were littered with rubbish, and there was everywhere a smell of stale refuse. The only redeeming feature was the carving on some of the doorways, the best of it done by the skilled artificers of Chiniot. The shopkeepers are mainly Aroras; but though most of them are followers of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, with an inconsistency that troubles no one in the East, they said they were not Sikhs. Passing the Gurdwára where they worship, I asked the Mahant,[1] who was teaching a number of girls, whether any of them could read the Granth Sahib and understand it.

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[1] The head of a Hindu or Sikh shrine.

He said some of them could; but when, at our request, they recited a passage from it, none of them could interpret it. The same kind of schooling goes on in the Jama Masjid, which is in charge of a maulvi who has studied theology at Delhi. He has also studied country medicine and is as much sought after for the ills of the flesh as for the needs of the soul. The Jama Masjid is being repaired at a cost of Rs.8,000, and Rs.6,000 of this is being subscribed by the Qureshis, and the rest by the humbler Muhammadan folk of the townlet. As in one or two other places we have come across, there is a panchayet under the new Act, which has settled about fifty cases. So far no fines have been imposed, for, as was explained, 'we must not start with severity' (*sakhti*). The aim at present is to settle everything amicably.

[16 MILES]

January 24*th*. HAVELI BEHADUR SHAH *to* FARID MAHMID

We are now in the Shorkot tahsil, and the road to-day was like yesterday's, good to ride on but stretching away in weary monotony to an infinity of grey sky. Out of this infinity sometimes rose a cloud of dust heralding the approach of a lorry; sometimes the shadowy line of a string of camels; and occasionally a dark speck denoting a laden pedestrian: never a cart—there are barely twenty in the tahsil, and less than fifty in Jhang.[1] It was a relief at the end of the march to find a canal bungalow set in a grove of trees.

A Sial Bank and Village

In the evening I visited a half-empty village of Siáls[2] —half empty because many are living on their land. About twenty were present for the inspection of their bank, and as we sat down on string beds, a gentle rain began to fall. Looking at their clod-like faces, I felt it impossible that they could run a bank, however small: the treasurer could just write his name, but the rest were completely illiterate. Yet, after a bad start, they had got the thing going and had some rudimentary idea of what they were about. The mullah of a neighbouring village—they themselves had a mosque but no mullah—was acting as secretary, and they had as their vice-president a man who had the natural intelligence and capacity so often found in the village. Debt was as heavy as usual: a member with six squares owed Rs.6,000, and another with a single square Rs.2,000. The former had no idea how much he had had in cash, nor how his debt had mounted up, but supposed it was due to compound interest. Their pir had visited them yesterday and brought with him two companions, two horses, and a cow, all of which had been put up by one of the members present; and he received from his host sixteen pounds of gram (worth over a rupee) to take away with him. The other villagers bade him return after the spring harvest as they had nothing to give him. The women of the village still grind and spin, and to get the grinding done in time, rise before dawn; but all the field-work they do is to take the men their meals and pick the cotton, and they do not even do the milking, still less the sweeping. The men do not rise till after dawn and cultivate on immemorial lines. They have not a single modern implement of any kind, and it was only last autumn that good seed was provided (through the bank) for the first time.

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[1] *Shorkot A. R.*, p. 4, and *Jhang A. R.*, p. 5.

[2] A tribe of Punwar Rajput and 'politically one of the most important tribes of the western plains' (Rose, *op. cit.* iii. 417).

The Head of a Shrine

'Shorkot', says the settlement officer, 'is the land of prosperous shrines and pauper peasants.'[1] The village is certainly an instance of the pauper peasant, and not far away is an example of a prosperous shrine. Founded 275 years ago to teach the people the way in which they should go, it is one of the most revered in the district. Its peculiarity is that the Sajjáda Nishin, as the incumbent is called, never marries but always adopts his successor from a collateral branch. The present incumbent, who came to see me to-day, is a man of dignified bearing and laughed disdainfully when I asked him whether he did piri-mureedi. The prosperity of the shrine is based upon its large estates, for which every year he pays Rs.4,000 in land revenue. As a landlord, he said that he helped his tenants in all their necessities and advanced them loans free of interest. Last November he had advanced wheat seed which cost him over Rs.6 a maund, and though he could not expect to get more than Rs.4 a maund at harvest-time (when it would be repaid) he would not demand more grain than he had given. As he left he said: 'No doubt the people are better off than they were, and much has been done for them with banks and other things, but this much he would respectfully represent (*itna arz hai*): in the old days they were masters of all three Bárs,[1] but now they are hemmed in by those who have been settled in the country from other parts of the Punjab.' The old inhabitant views the colonist as an interloper and a supplanter, and when he first appeared, did his best to drive him out by stealing his cattle.

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[1] *Shorkot A. R.*, p. 18.

[12 MILES]

January 25th. FARID MAHMUD *to* SHORKOT

When we started, yesterday's grey sky was greyer than ever, and beneath it the world lay flat and desolate. The first village we passed through was as desolate as the world around it, for like the one visited yesterday evening half its houses had been abandoned; yet, because it was a colony village, it had eight or nine shopkeepers. How they all make their living it is impossible to imagine, but they said they managed it, and no doubt money-lending plays its part in this. Those of them who came out to meet me with the members of the bank said they had great difficulty in getting back their dues, and the peasants round did not contradict them.

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[1] The upland country, formerly waste, lying between the Jhelum and the Chenab, the Chenab and the Ravi, and the Ravi and the Sutlej.

A Model Farm

At a little distance from the village in mid-country I noticed a compact little homestead islanded with wheat. On inquiry, it proved to be the farm of a remarkable pair of Jat brothers. Twenty-six years ago, realizing that there were too many mouths to be fed on their father's half square here, they tramped off to seek their fortunes in Lyallpur. They secured the lease of five squares of more or less virgin soil in a village of Arains. At first they got little back for their toil, but the rent was low, and they were wise enough to copy the Arains and their admirable methods of cultivation. Little by little the land was brought under subjection, and money accumulated. With each rounded sum of Rs.1,000 they bought land near their father's property, and at the end of twenty years, when their father died, they had become the owners of two squares, having paid Rs.12,000 for the one and Rs.8,000 for the other. How had they saved so much? 'I live like this,' said Behadur, the brother who was talking to us, and he pointed to his thin home-spun shirt and the half-bare chest below. With their father's land they now had 2½ squares (69 acres) to farm. The first thing they did was to call in their neighbours to clear the new land of its trees. A hundred kikar trees were felled, and for each felling eight annas was paid. The more valuable shisham was then planted in lines to screen house and land from the wind and the outside world, much as has been done by the farmers in Normandy. A garden was also stocked with young fruit trees—oranges, lemons, pomegranates, dates, and mangoes. But nothing was done till money was available. The most recent undertaking was a well fully sunk, but not yet equipped. Since, owing to their more scattered life, neighbours here are less accustomed to help each other than farther south, all labour had to be paid for at the rate of nine annas a day. The cost of the well when finished will be about Rs.900, the depth to water being 20 feet.

Methods of Cultivation

I asked Behadur how far the cultivators of Jhang differed in their cultivation from the colonists of Lyallpur, who mostly come from the central Punjab. 'You are wise', he said, 'and will understand what I say. Here there is no method (*kaida*). There is no sugar-cane, no maize, and no melons (*kharbuza*). My first year here I planted melons, but the people dug them up with their feet to see what they were, and all eat them, and there was nothing left for me to sell. If I grow gram, passers-by pick the unripe pods and eat them all the way to Shorkot. They say all depends upon the kindness of Allah. Without doubt Allah gives and he takes away, but it is in every one's power (*ikhtiar*) to do well. I offer a man a rupee to clear the stalks from a *killa* of land:[1] it is in his power to earn the rupee or not. I get up before dawn, but they do not get up till after it is light. I also weed my fields and see that cattle do not eat my crops in mouthfuls. I know, too, that when land grows weak, there should be two crops of gram before wheat is sown again, but they do not know that. Also I have a hundred sheep; and when the cold is passed, in March, I put them out on the land day and night, as their manure is good for it: they stay a month on each killa, then move on the next; and every night they are kept on a separate bit, so that the whole may gain. Then the people do not clean out their channels or ridge their fields. When I came, I took the earth from the channels and spread it over the land.[2] I plough my fields five or six times, but they do this only once or twice,' and so on. It was, perhaps, as well that none of his neighbours were there to hear what he thought of them. But he is not their only critic. 'It seems almost ironic to talk of initiative and enterprise,' says the settlement officer.[3] 'Utter strangers to intensive cultivation,' they do not even understand the virtue of the fallow and 'would rather have from each field a poor crop every year than two good crops in three years and thus save the revenue, the abiána,[1] the seed, and the labour once every three years'.[2] Against all this must be set the charm of the people, a quality too imponderable to be weighed against anything concrete and, to most, not so important as the acquisition of wealth, but to some so engaging as to cover a multitude of sins.

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[1] 1.1 acres.

[2] This is commonly done in China: see F. H. King, *Farmers of Forty Centuries*, 1927.

[3] *Lower Chenab Colony A. R.*, 1923, p. 8.

Behadur did not know much of the activities of 'the beneficent departments'. I pointed to my Sub-Inspector and asked if he knew who he was. 'He gets the zemindars' money from the Sirkari[3] banks, and tells them when to repay.' This was not quite the reply that I wanted, for the banks are not Government banks and co-operation, of course, is much more than getting money for the cultivator and telling him when to repay. But Behadur's ignorance of co-operation was more than compensated by his independence; for when I asked why he did not join a bank, he replied: 'I go neither to the bank nor to the sahukar. I only spend money when I have it. He, too, is wise who only takes money from the bank according to his need and pays it back when it is due (*waqt nál*). Those who do not do this have much trouble.' He did not think much of the iron plough. The country plough was as good if you ploughed many times. He had seen ——'s squares (and he named a large landowner well known for his up-to-date methods) and the great ploughs being used there, but he thought the crops much the same as elsewhere.

A Jat House

His house was characteristic. Built round a large courtyard, it was approached through an arched gateway in the middle of a high wall designed for protection against the cattle-thief. In the cold weather his cattle—eight bullocks, two cows, and two milch buffaloes—remained at night in the courtyard, and to keep half of it clean the yard was divided in two by a low wall, which incidentally served as a manger. The sheep had a pen of their own, and each brother had his own room and kitchen. The rooms were as clean and as beautifully arranged as those in the Bilochi's house; and there was the same array of possessions—plated boxes, flowered trunks, painted bedsteads, many-coloured baskets, shining vessels, and well-piled pitchers. The last, both in colour and design, were the most beautiful that I have ever seen. One brother had obtained his collection by giving a buffalo in exchange. In each room, skied aloft, was a chair 'for the sahib' (*sahib waste*). This love of orderly arrangement is almost unknown in the centre and south of the province, but common enough in the west and the north. Why this should be, no one could say. Is it because the women have less to do outside the house? Here, for example, they have almost no outdoor work: water is not fetched, fodder not chopped, dung-cakes not made, and the cattle byres are swept out by the men. But much spinning is done, and in one of the kitchen rooms two women were sitting on the spotless floor under a roof black with soot spinning the snowy thread. They do this twice a day, each time for three hours.

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[1] The water-rate. [2] *Lower Chenab Colony A. R.*, p. 29. [3] Government.

The Beginnings of a Village

This is the first real farm that I have come across on this tour, and Behadur took me round as a farmer would take one round in the West, even telling me at the end exactly where his land ended. But so strong in this country is the village community instinct that a little colony of menials and artisans is growing up round him. A barber, a water-carrier, a weaver, and a cobbler have all attached themselves to him, and when I asked whether he charged them rent—'toba, toba—God forbid—,' he exclaimed, 'when a man has enough, he should help the poor.' Here, indeed, were the beginnings of a new village, and it was perhaps in the same way that many of the villages in the Punjab began. There was even a mosque, a neat little mud-plastered building with a miniature dome; and it derived a certain beauty from its extreme cleanness and the golden colour of the straw embedded in the clay. As one would expect, Behadur says his prayers five times a day. Those present thought that 25 per cent of the peasants did the same, but that amongst women the percentage was rather less. Women pray exactly like the men, bowing their heads to the ground. As so often happens, the old world and the new carry on side by side in Behadur. On the one hand, he has started keeping accounts—as he cannot read or write this is done for him—and on the other, he wears in his ears a charm given him by his pir to keep him in health. When his pir comes, he gives him five rupees, but he does not pay the zakat, because he never has anything over at the end of the year.

Zemindar, Doctor, and Grocer

Continuing our march, we came to another garden full of fruit trees planted by the Jat president of an A class bank. He, too, was a man of unusual character, for he not only cultivated his two squares, but had also studied Yunani medicine at Multan for a year. He had converted half his garden house into a dispensary, and half into a shop for the sale of petty groceries. The dispensary was provided with a number of medical treatises, all in the vernacular. There were over seventy members in the bank, and all but the president and the secretary were illiterate. Yet many had a clear idea of the rules.

An unwilling Pir

Riding into Shorkot,[1] I was reminded of Gwalior and its bold island fortress. The acropolis here is less bold and precipitous, but it is even more striking, as it rises abruptly from a limitless plain. Some connect it with Alexander, and I was shown coins, evidently of great antiquity, which were said to have been found here. The town is now a centre of the great piri-mureedi industry. Of this a Seyyed, who belongs to a leading family of pirs, told me some illuminating stories. Ten or fifteen years ago, when he was reading for his B.A. and on vacation, one of the family mureeds appeared and begged him for a charm to enable him to get a son. He had hoped to see the uncle, who was head of the family, but as he was away on tour, he came to the nephew instead. The nephew, feeling a natural diffidence about his powers and expecting his uncle back shortly, persuaded the mureed to stay the night. But the uncle did not return, and the mureed renewed his entreaties. All he needed, he said, was a verse from the Koran. Feeling it churlish to refuse what could be so easily given, the nephew wrote out a verse, and the mureed went away happy. A year later, the nephew saw a not unfamiliar figure approaching him slowly with a cow. It was the mureed returning with the customary thank-offering, for the charm had worked and God had blessed him with a son. In the same spirit, no doubt, did Hannah offer 'unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh' three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine as a thank-offering for the birth of her infant Samuel.[1]

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[1] Population (1921), 5,317.

Jumma the Jinn

A year or two later, a relative came to see the nephew with a singular proposal. This centred round a jinn called Jumma (a popular name for jinns), who, so he affirmed, had fled from the family shrine, because he had not been paid sufficient attention. The relative had dreamt that he was willing to return and offered to induce him to do so, provided he was taken into the family's spiritual business. With Jumma's return this business would certainly expand, for Jumma was a powerful fellow. He could do three things—instantly gratify a wish, eat fire, and reveal the unseen. As a guarantee of good faith, he was prepared to demonstrate this in public. A day was fixed accordingly, and many gathered to see the result. The scene of the demonstration was a large courtyard, and the time dusk. Three men appeared accompanied by minstrels, and when the music struck up began shaking their heads from side to side. After three hours of this came the tests. First of all, the pir offered to produce any fruit named by the nephew that grew within two miles. Now the nephew had in his compound an almond tree, probably the only one in the neighbourhood and known only to few, and at that moment covered with unripe almonds. He asked, therefore, for an unripe almond. The pir protested there was no such fruit within two miles, but hearing of the unknown tree passed on quickly to the second test, the ordeal by fire. A fire was kindled at the far end of the courtyard, and spits of wood heated till they were red-hot. These the possessed lifted to their mouths, and in the dark they appeared for a moment to be eating fire. But approaching them, the nephew found that it was an illusion due to the reflection thrown upon their faces by the glowing spits, which at a distance seemed to be applied to their very mouths. In the third test, the revelation of the unknown, the pir was on stronger ground, for who can disprove (or prove) a revelation of this kind? The incredulous nephew asked for a further test. The pir agreed and said that if a goat were slain and cooked, Jumma would dispose of it whole at a sitting. Accordingly, a goat was slain (outside the courtyard) and cut up and cooked, and the whole handed over to one of the possessed to be consumed. He retired for the purpose into the shadow of some jál trees, which happened to be in the courtyard. Here he thought he would be safe from observation, for jal trees at night are haunted and no ordinary person will approach them, But the pir had not reckoned with modern education. The nephew approached and saw the possessed man digging a hole in the ground with his knife and burying the dismembered limbs of the poor slaughtered goat. And that was the end of the trial; but not of the pir. He went off to Multan and set up for himself, and so successfully that people flocked to his shrine and money poured in. At the time, he told the nephew that he never made less than Rs.400 a week and once got Rs.1,300. But like greater men, he became intoxicated by success and claimed to be able to cure the blind. Here Jumma failed him, and his business collapsed.

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[1] 1 Samuel i. 24.

An Undergraduate's Escapade

A story that I heard from a doctor in another district may be related here, since it illustrates the great influence of the pir and the extreme credulity of his followers in the village. When at college, ten years ago, the doctor badly wanted a 200-rupee camera. A cousin of his at another college was also in need of funds. Both being members of a well-known family of pirs, the cousin suggested a week's tour amongst the family mureeds in the central Punjab, and as the doctor only wanted a camera, it was agreed that he should get the first 200 rupees, and his cousin the rest. So off they went, and a week later returned the richer by Rs.600. Everywhere they were treated like gods, and cows, buffaloes, sheep, and goats were pressed upon them. The cousin, who had had some experience of piri-mureedi, did most of the oracle business, but when pressed with cases, passed some of them on to his companion. One of these was a mother who was worried because her boy could not learn to read the Koran: he was willing enough, but whenever he tried, his mind ran away with him. Would the Pir Sahib give him a charm. He called for country paper and ink—characteristically there is more faith in country products than in their European equivalents—and drew a number of circles and triangles. In each of these he wrote something appropriate, but coming to the last was at a loss for a suitable saying. In desperation he wrote—'all 's well that ends well', and giving the charm to the mother, told her that if she had it set in silver and gold and the boy wore it on his arm, he would be able to read the Koran in six months. Two years passed, and one day when he was walking on the Mall in Lahore he was accosted by the boy. Pointing to a golden amulet on his arm, he said it had been completely successful and he had learnt to read the Koran within the six months. His cousin achieved even greater things.

A zaildar wanted a son, and, though a B.A., thought a charm would be a help. The charm was given, and a year later came a buffalo and forty rupees in token of the son's arrival. The cousins were not only asked for charms, but were brought every kind of dispute for settlement, and their decisions were accepted without question. In a singularly quarrelsome country, could there be a more remarkable testimony to the power of faith?

A Pir's Ministrations

The taking of a degree seems to be no bar either to the giving or to the acceptance of a tawiz. A young pir who took his B.A. in 1927 came to see me the other day about an appointment, and talking of piri-mureedi said that being at leisure last May he set out on a tour to visit his mureeds in the western Punjab. He returned six weeks later with twenty sheep and goats, six cows, and Rs.600 in cash, the price of the forty or fifty charms given daily. They were mostly given to those who wanted *aulád* or *daulat*—offspring or wealth; but they were also given to young men to compass their amorous desires, to the less beloved of two wives to oust the favourite, to those who wished to marry but had been repulsed, to men smarting for revenge (*dushman marne ke liye*), to litigants anxious for the success of their suits, to those troubled with sick bodies or whose cattle were ill, and even to those who wished to divide lovers. Seventy-five per cent of his clients were women. How, I asked, could he give spells '*dushman marne ke liye*'? These words, he explained, did not mean to kill, but only to injure an enemy. A charm could not be refused for any purpose, for the mureed would press him hard and say: 'You are our pir and must help us against our enemies, for who else will do this? If you do not help us in everything, you cannot be our pir.' In India, friend and protector are expected to help a man whether he is right or wrong; indeed more than ever if he is wrong, for friendship and protection are matters not of morals but of need. In this case, the young pir felt he had to choose between being a pir for every purpose or for none. There are, he said, three rates for pirs: the poor give only a rupee, others five or ten according to their means. But when a son is born or married, the offering is larger, and as much as Rs.50 may be given. The Bilochis I met a few days back said they could not marry their sons, unless their pir was present. And he must also be present at a circumcision, for he has to cut the babe's hair before anything else can be done.

Casting out of Jinns

On the march to-day I was accompanied by a member of a well-known family of pirs. He told me that two or three of his family constantly went out on tour, and after paying all expenses made thirty or forty rupees a month. Though themselves Muhammadans, many of their mureeds were Hindus. When a Hindu mureed has a son, he brings him to the shrine and offers the pir a scarf (*rumál*) and five pice, five being a lucky number with Hindus.[1] A year later they return to have the babe's hair shaved and offer Re.1/4, i. e. five four-anna pieces. Some Muhammadans do this too, doubtless following the custom of the days when they were Hindus. Many, particularly women, come to Shorkot to have jinns cast out. The rite is this: Pepper is thrown into a fire, and the woman's face thrust into the ascending smoke. When she is half conscious, a knot is tied in her hair over one of her ears, and the jinn imprisoned within it. He is then adjured to come forth. If he is stubborn and refuses, force is used and the woman beaten. If he still refuses, irons are heated, and the sight of them red-hot is generally sufficient to drive him out; if they are applied, it is only for a moment. My informant says that he has seen this done, and that he has even cast out a jinn himself, though without recourse to extremes.

The Seyyed B.A. whom I have already quoted told me that when he had just matriculated, he challenged a pir to drive out a jinn in his presence. The challenge was accepted and the Seyyed bidden to the pir's house in Multan. A woman said to be possessed was brought in and settled on the floor with three female minstrels near her. The pir sat on a bed in front, and bidding the minstrels thrum on their drums, leant forward and passed and repassed a finger round her head, muttering as he did so, passages from the Koran. Many times he called upon the jinn to declare his name, but the woman always replied with hers. He then made her shake her head and keep on shaking it from side to side. Drums and incantations began again, but all in vain. In despair the pir seized a stick and was about to belabour her in orthodox style, when the Seyyed, in whom the humaner feelings were stronger than the scientific, intervened and said that a jinn that had to be driven out in that way was no jinn at all. The jinn was there, said the pir unabashed, but it was a heretic (*káfir*) jinn and not a Muhammadan.

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[1] 'The number five and its aliquot parts runs through most religious and ceremonial customs' (Rose, *op. cit.* i. 222).

In all this there is nothing peculiar to the Punjab. Doughty describes the same practices in Arabia. 'In the Arabic borderlands there is hardly a child, or almost an animal, which is not defended from the evil one by a charm.' 'The same men catch after charms that will not pay for medicines: every wiseacre of them would purchase a hijab (an amulet written with the names of Allah) with reals, even were they the last in his slender purse.'[1] Doughty was a doctor and to a large extent paid his way through Arabia by what he could earn with his medicines. To a man of less stern mould it would have been a severe temptation not to give the sick charms instead. 'Why', he was asked, 'write you no hijabs? Write, man, and the whole town will be at thy door, and every one with two dollars, or three, in his hand. Thou couldst be enriched soon that now never canst thrive in this selling of medicines.'[2]

[7 MILES]

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[1] C. M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1926 edition), i. 258.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 257.

January 26th. SHORKOT *to* KORANGA

Easy Credit To-day we stopped on our way to see a village of Pathans, who illustrate the dangers of easy credit when the Land Alienation Act proves no bar.[1] As they have not been declared agriculturists under the Act, any one is free to buy their land, and the local money-lenders have taken full advantage of the opportunity. Willingly have they lent, and willingly have the Pathans borrowed. Thirty of them now owe Rs.68,000 and their 4,400 acres of 25 years ago have shrunk to 2,970. One of those present, the owner of 100 acres, said that at the last spring harvest his money-lender, after doing the weighing, took away with him:

96 out of 132 maunds[2] of wheat—the remaining 36 were left to feed him and the 5 others dependent on him,
25 or 26 maunds of gram,
21 maunds of barley, and
17 or 18 maunds of wheat straw; and in addition he was given 4 merlas of green wheat for his cattle.

All of which was in payment of a debt of Rs.800 taken two or three years ago to pay off another money-lender. Nearly all the cultivator's transactions in this tahsil are in grain, the result of an almost entire absence of markets. Five per cent is deducted from advances of cash; fodder is taken at both harvests and not brought into the account; and, of course, no receipts are given. The ordinary rate of interest is no higher than elsewhere, for the most part 18¾ per cent, but one way and another the debtor is entirely in the hands of his creditor. It is characteristic of the general carelessness about money that in 1922 the president of this bank had misappropriated Rs.100 with apparently no dishonest intent, and though brought to book in 1927, had not yet paid up. The Secretary, too, had carried off nearly as much with him to Sind, where he has land. But this he has made good.

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[1] Under the Land Alienation Act, which came into force in 1901, a non-agriculturist may not buy land from a member of an agriculturist tribe, nor may he take it in mortgage from him for more than twenty years. For a discussion of the Act see the author's *op. cit.*, pp. 186–8.

[2] A maund is 82·28 lb.

Better Farming and Better Living

The members, realizing at last that they stand in peril of losing all their lands, have started both a Better Farming and a Better Living society. The Better Farming society has introduced them to good seed, Meston ploughs, the bar harrow, the Kharif sowing drill, and the fodder cutter. Unfortunately the last was too damaged for work, and as so often happens in this country, no one either in the village or at Shorkot could repair it. The object of the Better Living society is to bring expenditure on marriages and funerals within reasonable limits. Before the society was formed, they said, no Pathan could possibly have got married for less than Rs.1,000, but now no one may spend more than Rs.500. Two members had recently intermarried daughter and son for Rs.900. One undertaking, as novel as it is excellent, is to get one of the three midwives trained at the hospital in Shorkot. In this tract most midwives are wives of water-carriers.

Pardah

Following the Seyyeds and the Qureshis (but not the Jats) of the district, the Pathans observe the strictest pardah, and on the rare occasions on which their wives issue forth, only their hands remain unveiled. This, they declared, was enjoined by their religion. Like every one else they have a pir, but unlike most their pir is also their murshid, and he lives in far-away Swat. Many and widespread are the ramifications of Indian society.

The Bar

The canal colony was now finally left behind and we found ourselves amongst island wells, each encircled with a few acres of fodder and wheat. Presently these islands ceased, and we entered a region as wide and empty as the open sea, and barren of all but scrub. Though it was only January, the sun turned the stretches of hard naked clay to surfaces of blinding light. We might have been amidst the 'dry places' through which walked 'the unclean spirit' of the parable (was he called Jumma?) 'seeking rest, and finding none'. For nearly ten miles we rode on, meeting an occasional wayfarer on horse or camel, and once or twice even a lorry. A family of five, mounted on two ponies, were on their way to condole with a relative. A fakir on foot was returning from a similar mission to his pir, who had just been bereaved. When we seemed completely cut off from the abodes of men, a dark mass rose against the horizon, at first hardly higher than the sea of scrub, then gathering form and size like a distant shore seen from a ship. This proved to be the trees of Koranga, and as we passed under their shade I felt as if I were entering a new world. Actually, it was the district of Multan, but for the moment, with tree and field transfigured by the setting sun, it seemed like an enchanted land. And all the result of an insignificant canal.[1]

[14 MILES]

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[1] One of the Sidhnai canals which are fed by the Ravi.

In view of what is said in this chapter about charms and jinns, it is interesting to note that a member of the Legislative Assembly (Sir Bomanji Dahal) attributes his escape, when last April a bomb was thrown into the middle of the Assembly, to a gold charm 'given him by an astrologer', which he was wearing as a pendant to his watch-chain. The charm 'was badly damaged by the splinters it had stopped' (*The Times*, 26th October 1929).

Even more significant is the resistance recently encountered by the Health authorities of Bombay to their measures for combating malaria in the town. 'One of the first steps necessary was the sealing up of the large number of the mosquito-breeding wells which exist in private compounds, and which are mainly used for religious purposes.' The covering up of the wells was strongly objected to on the ground 'that by the use of covers the spirits which dwell in the wells will be unable to gain entrance or exit. The Municipal Commissioner now announces that in order to give access and egress to the spirits, brass plates, with fine holes not more than one-twentieth of an inch in diameter, are allowed to be inserted in the concrete cover' (*The Times*, 9th July 1929).

IX. MULTAN

Landlord and Tenant

January 28*th*. KORANGA *to* JODHPUR

The District

In entering Multan we have by no means entered an enchanted land. Landlord, money-lender, and pir rule here as they do in Jhang, but their rule is less absolute, and the peasant less dependent. By an elaborate system of canals the waters of the Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej are taken all over the district, and are supplemented by an equally elaborate system of wells. This of itself would not be sufficient to account for the difference, for Jhang too has both canal and well. But Jhang has nothing to correspond to the city of Multan, which with its population of 85,000 provides a good market for the produce of the district and also a centre through which 'the new light' is just beginning to find its way from the outside world into village and hamlet. This must inevitably be a slow process, for generally the peasant lives not in a village, but isolated on a well.

A 'Devotee of the Straight Line'

The zaildar, a big shaggy man with a portly strut, walked with us the first mile and talked about his zail, in which there are thirty-seven villages. In ten or twelve of them boys and girls are taught together at the mosque, but nowhere is this done in the school. Why? 'It is not our custom,' and that settled the matter—and the following point as well. A member of the Agricultural Department had recently given two lectures about new ploughs. As a good zaildar he had attended them, but he could not remember anything about the ploughs, either their names or their price—at which he laughed loudly, exclaiming in self-defence: 'But *our* ploughs are better.' Again I asked why? 'Because they are according to our custom: we are devotees of the straight line (*laqir ke faqir*).' There are five or six pirs in his zail, and they are all doing well, better than before, because the people are better off and have more to give them. For the same reason jewellery is increasing.

Adscriptus Glebae

Seeing a well-built country-house with a tower standing in a sea of wheat, we turned aside to have a look at it. The owner, a Sial with neither bearing nor breeding, came out to meet us in evident alarm. Reassured, he told us that forty years ago he had bought 100 acres of land and, as money came in, had gone on buying, and now he had 600 acres with a dozen wells. (Fifty acres generally go to a well.) Two hundred acres he farms himself, and the rest he lets to tenants who change every two or three years. Only one has he had for the whole forty years, and one more for ten years. There was a new garden a few hundred yards away. Why had he started it? 'For izzat,' was the naïve reply. He had no idea of the amenities of life. His pukka house, upon which he must have spent several thousand rupees, was designed and built by some one from Multan who evidently had a feeling for proportion. Outside, with its towered upper room, it was attractive; but inside, it was a mere barn, without any of the charm of the houses seen in Jhang and containing far fewer possessions. 'We do not need possessions', he said, 'but land.' The courtyard in front was merely an open cattle byre, and at its entrance was a well hard at work. The man lived entirely for his land and in this respect was in marked contrast to Behadur, the cheerful farmer we met three days ago. With Behadur, the land was made for man, but here man seemed made for the land. However, like Behadur, he shared his good things with others. A whole hive of poorer folk were living round the house: cobblers, weavers, Biloch camel-men, carders of cotton (*kasai*), sweepers converted to Islam (*musalli*), and beggars—two of each of these; and a potter, a water-carrier—his wife acted as midwife to the colony—a fakir-astrologer, a barber, a maulvi to serve the mosque, and the indispensable Arora to keep the estate accounts. Here again, as in Behadur's case, were the beginnings of a new village, and this time at a slightly more developed stage. This year, on the advice of his gardener, he has started growing potatoes and has sent a relative to Lyallpur to get the seed. He knew nothing, however, of the activities of the Agricultural Department; but a cobbler who lived on the estate had been given one of their pamphlets at a large gathering recently held at Kabirwala, the headquarters of the tahsil. A partially educated relative who was present—he himself had no education at all—had been last year to Khanewal to see the demonstration train. What had he seen? 'More things than he ever thought existed.'

The only incident of the march was the crossing of the Ravi, which presented the melancholy spectacle of a river drained of every drop of its water by canals. There was not even the appearance of damp. The other side we saw women and children picking cotton, and a very pretty sight it was to see the leafless stalks alive with the gay colours of the red and blue shawls—autumn and summer hand in hand.

[15 MILES]

January 29*th*. JODHPUR *to* KABIRWALA

A pukka House

We are now definitely in the 'arid' zone, for the rainfall is only 6½ inches. But while nothing can be grown by rain alone, nothing can be grown without it: canal and well by themselves are not sufficient. We stopped at a village of Jats[1] to see a small bank, which contained both landowners and tenants. But the biggest landowner had no more than 200 acres. He had just built himself a pukka house for Rs.3,500—as solid and square and ugly as an out-station Government building. Inside, the rooms had the perfect orderliness of the Jhang houses, and one room contained a beautifully carved kajáwa[1] from Ahmadpur in Jhang. In the courtyard was a hand-pump, the first I have seen in a zemindar's house. Here they have suddenly become the fashion, and in the last two years are said to have spread all over the district. As they can be had for Rs.32 and a water-carrier has to be given eight maunds of wheat a year, they soon pay their cost.

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[1] In the south-west Jat 'includes that congeries of Muhammadan tribes who are not Seyyeds, Bilochis, Pathans, or Qureshis' (*Muzaffargarh Gaz.*, 1908, p. 64).

Pardah Being a man of substance, the owner kept his women in pardah. The less substantial make their wives help them in their work. The maulvi, who was present, said that this was a great error, but admitted there was no custom of pardah. 'It is not in our power,' said one peasant; 'we are too poor.' Though the maulvi declared that pardah was enjoined by the Koran, he did not know where this was written. 'This, however, I know: the wives of the Prophet, on whom be peace, kept pardah, and they are the mothers of the Muslemin. Others therefore must keep it too.' 'But how about the wives who helped the wounded on the field of battle?' asked a Muhammadan member of my staff.[2] 'They broke pardah under compulsion (*majburi se*),' was the reply. As for the Amir, who was mentioned, he had committed an error, and rebellion had come.

Three persons in the village, which was not a wealthy one, had paid the zakát last year, one of them the maulvi's own father. I asked if they all had a pir. 'Without a pir, a man is nothing,' said some one.[3] But their pir did not give them charms: 'that is a thing for children; instead he utters prayers.' These Jats do not believe in co-education. Two boys are taught the Koran by the maulvi at the mosque, and six girls are taught by his wife.

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[1] See p. 228 n.

[2] The reference is to the battles of Uhd, Ahzab, and Khaibar. At Uhd the Prophet was accompanied by his wife, Hazrat Aisha, his aunt, Safiah, and two other women, who gave the wounded water and bandaged their wounds. Another woman, Um-i-Amara, took part in the battle and at a critical moment helped to defend the Prophet himself. A woman also fought at Ahzab; and at Khaibar the Prophet was accompanied by his wife, Um-i-Salma, and other women who tended the wounded (*Sirat-ul-Nabi*, pp. 441 and 443).

[3] Cf. 'To be without a pir and mir (mirási) is practically to be an outcast' (*Multan Gaz.*, 1924, p. 120).

Money-lending

The heavy indebtedness of some of the members of the society led to talk about the money-lender. There are three kinds of money-lending: ordinary dealings in cash or grain; dealings in cattle, which are sold to the cultivator on the instalment system, and dealings in necessities—clothes, salt, oil, &c.—which are supplied on credit. Some money-lenders deal only in cattle, others only in cash or grain; but most deal in all three. The ordinary rate of interest is the usual $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent, but there is a preliminary cut called 'chilkána', of six pies in the rupee, or Rs.3/2 per Rs.100. Most of the repayments—say 80 per cent—are made in grain, and very little cash passes either way. When cash is needed, to pay the land revenue, a bribe, or a pleader's fee, it has to be bought like any other commodity.[1] And as cash is scarce, it has to be bought dear. The money-lender is well placed to make his recoveries, for he does all the weighments at harvest. According to what is known as the Dahbir system, every owner, even the meanest, has a Hindu agent to do this, and gives him a seer for every maund he weighs.[2] The small owners employ him in imitation of the large, and regard it as a point of izzat to do so. This was also the case in another village visited; and a man who had only nine acres said he gave his agent half a seer per maund, though there was virtually nothing for him to do. In a third village we found that under the influence of co-operation the system had just been given up.

To gauge the exactions of the money-lender we asked three members of the bank how much their money-lenders had taken from them at the last spring harvest. The first man with his 100 acres was one of the biggest owners in the village and owed Rs.2,000. The money-lender, who weighed the grain, took 26 maunds towards his account and left him 125. This was not done under pressure (*zor nál*), but of his own free will (*rázamandi se*). The next was a peasant proprietor with only 12 acres, who owed Rs.400. Again the weighment was done by the money-lender, and 16 maunds were taken and only 32 left. In this case pressure and free will were probably about equal. The third case was that of a tenant, a Gujar with a debt of Rs.300 and the owner of two yoke of oxen, a cow, and twenty-five sheep and goats. He had cultivated 12½ acres of wheat, half of which had to be given to the landlord. The remainder amounted to 42 maunds, of which the money-lender took 30, leaving him 12. Here there was evidently more pressure than free will. When your 12 maunds were exhausted, what did you do? 'I went to ask him for grain and clothing; but he refused to give me anything more.' His credit was exhausted; he had, in fact, been unable to borrow anything for eighteen months. And what did you do then? 'My son works as a labourer, and with what he earned I bought gram to eat and seed to sow.' At the autumn harvest, the one just past, the money-lender had come again and taken all his cotton—a mere four maunds—and left him only 2½ maunds of millet to live on.

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[1] I owe this idea to Mr. J. S. Thomson, I.C.S., recently Deputy Commissioner of Multan.

[2] A maund (82·28 lb.) has 40 seers.

[8 MILES]

January 30th. KABIRWALA *to* QADIRABAD

The Climate

This has been one of the coldest days that I can remember in this country, the kind of cold which pinches the ear and makes the thickest clothes seem like gossamer. A cruel day for the peasant. Many we met on the road were walking along with puggaree wound round the forehead almost to the eyes, with cotton cloak drawn close round the shivering body, and with the hands so completely buried in its folds that the only salaam that could be given was to bow the head already bowed to escape the cutting wind. This was so much stronger than the sun that when we came to inspect our bank we had to move to the lee of a wall.

A Bride's Dowry

All the members (Jats) were wearing homespun, and only their puggarees came from the bazaar. 'We are poor folk', said one, 'and must make our own clothes.' As evidence of their poverty, they said that they did not usually spend more than Rs.100 on their marriages. The president of the bank, the owner of 40 acres, was actually marrying his daughter on the morrow. We went round, therefore, to his house to see the dowry. There was little outward and visible sign of an impending marriage: only two women cleaning with a sieve the rice flour which had been bought for the feast. In the house, which was golden with a new roof of thatch, the ladies of the household showed us a basket containing about 200 rupees' worth of silver ornaments—bracelets, anklets, necklaces, &c.—and a pile of neatly folded shawls (*salárian*) and skirts (*ghaggre*), and a charming cotton pink shirt pleasantly embroidered. A dozen of each were to be given, all spun by the ladies of the household and woven by weavers of the neighbourhood. Their value was put at another Rs.200. This made Rs.400 for the dowry; but the striking thing was that it had been slowly got together, piece by piece, ornament by ornament, during the last seven or eight years, and all that would now be spent was Rs.50 on the feasting of the guests—a remarkable and unexpected example of thrift. The bank had wisely elected the bride's father president of the society.

Tenants

Most of those present were owners, but there were a few tenants as well. I asked one whether he preferred a landlord who lived on his land or one who lived away. 'One who lives on his land,' he said. But when pressed to speak his mind without fear, he looked shyly round at the owners present and said in a timid voice that he preferred one who lived away; at which every one laughed. In this village tenants do not stay long on a particular well. Only one had stayed fifteen years, and one more over ten. Most moved on every two or three years, which cannot be very good for the land.

Asked whether they were not at leisure these days, one cultivator said: 'For a Jat there can never be leisure (*wela*): now he must water his fields and cut grass for his cattle, and later he must clean out his channels.' And after a further question, 'No—we do not weed our wheat—it is not our method (*dá*).' Four present kept a fowl or two, but they could not explain why they did not keep more.

Indigenous Co-operation

Though they mostly live round scattered wells, they have a certain amount of indigenous co-operation. When water is abundant and a man has more land to plough than he can manage, his neighbours come to his help with their bullocks and ploughs. And when a well is being sunk, they all take a turn in the digging, as in Gurgaon. This takes at least a week, possibly three. The only *quid pro quo* is a midday meal.

[15 MILES]

January 31*st.* QADERABAD *to* MULTAN

Food and Dress

Seeing eight yoke of oxen at work levelling a field by the roadside, we stopped to have a word with the owner. He and a brother cultivate 125 acres together, and instead of employing labour at a fixed wage, they engage a man for each pair of bullocks; and at harvest time the grain is divided into two equal heaps, one of which goes to the owners, and the other to the labourers. Thus, in return for their labour (the owners supply everything else) each labourer gets one-sixteenth of the whole, worth in a good year Rs.200. It was about ten o'clock, and the owner of the land said he had so far had nothing to eat; but it would soon be 'butter-milk time' (*chhahwela*) and the children would bring them the first of their two meals, after which they would eat nothing till the evening. He himself ate meat every second or third day. But when I asked whether his employees did the same, he shook his finger negatively. They would eat bread, greens (*sag*) and turnips, and meat only on festivals like the Id. They were levelling the ground, because the overseer had taken earth from the field to the depth of a foot to embank the new road along which we were going. He had not asked for payment, because, so he said, it was for the Sirkar, and he did not want to give trouble to the overseer, who might give him trouble in return. That he had many acres would never have been guessed from his appearance, for he wore a dark cloth coat much stained and a skirt (*tehmad*) full of holes. Though their houses are spotless, the people of the south-west have no flair for dress. Their puggarees always look as if they had been wound round the head in a hurry, and their skirts—tehmad or lungi—as if they were on the point of coming down.

Multan

At midday the two great domes of the shrines of Multan came into sight, rising against the distant horizon as arrestingly as the cathedral spires of Chartres when first seen 10 miles away. Built to commemorate two famous pirs, they already crowned the hill upon which they nobly stand when Tamerlane swept by on his way to Delhi at the head of his Mughal hordes, whose 'stink was more horrible than their colour'.[1] Multan was then 'the foremost barrier of Indian Muhammadanism' against the barbarism of Central Asia,[2] as for three centuries earlier (A.D. 700 to 1000) it had been 'the outpost of Islam in India',[3] and as much later it became an outpost of Sikhism in the Punjab. It has therefore played its part in history, and a very turbulent part it has been. As in Karnal,[4] this turbulence has had a demoralizing effect upon the people of the tract, and in both town and village is still liable to sudden explosion.

Threading our way along a dusty road past college, school, kacherry, and office, we entered once more the world of bungalows. I learn that yesterday was the coldest day in Multan for twenty-four years.

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[1] In 1397, see *Multan Gaz.*, p. 31.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[4] See p. 112.

[15 MILES]

February 1st. MULTAN *to* ADI BAGH

A Village Library

Making a circuit we came to a village, where a mosque and a library were being built by an association formed for the purpose. The president of the association, a young man of about twenty and the son of a landowner, was waiting by the roadside. He had read for two years at a college in Multan and was busy with his domestic affairs and the work of the association. At present its members number only fourteen, but more are expected, for many in the neighbourhood are said to be able to appreciate a book. The lowest educational standard required for this purpose was put at the lower middle. The mosque formed part of the scheme mainly to draw subscriptions from the devout! Both mosque and library, the latter a two-room affair, were half built.

Tenants

The young man is also president of a new village bank. As usual, we examined the members in their by-laws and found them well posted. Being mostly Seyyeds, half of them could read and write, a great help when by-laws have to be mastered. Several tenants were present. One of them, an old man with two large tusks and nothing between, when asked his age, said that he remembered the first train coming from Lahore. 'We heard a shout—the smoke-cart (*dhun-gaddi*) has come, and we all ran across the fields to see it.' Asked on how many wells he had worked, he named them all—eighteen of them. On one he had stayed thirty-five years, but on the others not more than two or three years each. A landlord present, a Seyyed, said that few liked a tenant to stay on a well more than eight or nine years, for fear he should establish a right of occupancy. This was no doubt bad for the land, for a tenant got to know his fields; but it could not be helped. In another village, too, we were told that tenants were constantly changed, and two men of about forty said they changed their well every two years, because their landlords were always trying to get more rent out of them. Actually, so far as occupancy rights are concerned, a lease for a term of years with annual payments of rent would leave no cause of apprehension.

The Agricultural Labourer's Wages

I inquired about the position of the labourer. The Seyyed employed twenty and gave them at each harvest nine to twelve maunds according to their work—wheat in the summer and rice in the autumn; enough fodder for one animal, and once a year a woollen blanket and a pair of shoes; and also, it was added, the services of the village barber free. The head labourer got two meals a day as well. Thirty-five years ago when he was a young man, the grain payments were not more than 5 to 7½ maunds. If the rates rose further, the owners would be ruined! For casual labour the rate was four to six annas a day. In the other village just mentioned the president of the bank gives his labourers Rs.10 a month, one meal a day, and two maunds of wheat at one harvest, and two maunds of rice at the other; also fodder for one animal, and the usual blanket and pair of shoes once a year. Rates are higher near Multan than 20 or 30 miles away from it. Round Shujabad, for instance, five to eight rupees a month are given, but no food. A good landlord of that neighbourhood told me he gave the better of his two men Rs.7-12 a month and the others Rs.5. Neither got anything more except a blanket and a pair of shoes. All whom I have questioned say that the labourer is able to live on these wages because of the odd jobs done by his family, such as picking the cotton, cutting the wheat, looking after a neighbour's sheep and goats, and watching the crops.

As the rates round Multan are higher than those farther away, so those in the Lyallpur colony with its constant demand for labour are higher still. A member of my staff who owns land in the colony employs two men. Both get three meals a day, and once a year a suit of clothes—shirt, skirt, and puggaree—and on festivals eight annas or so to spend at a fair. In addition they are provided with bedding—dhurry, cotton blanket (*khes*), and quilt—and one labourer gets Rs.10 a month, and the other, an unusually good man, Rs.15. These rates and the system of payment recall the offer made 3,000 years ago by Micah to the Levite whom he engaged as his priest, much as the farmer we met in Jhang must have engaged the mullah to serve the new mosque on his estate. 'Dwell with me . . . and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals.'[1] One reason why wages are low in the south-west of the province is the extreme immobility of labour. People cannot bear leaving their homes, and one of my staff relates that when he was transferred from Shujabad to Multan, a distance of only 25 miles, his servant who belonged to Shujabad refused to accompany him even with the bait of a higher wage.

Pirs and Pilgrims

To return to the Seyyed village, none of the Seyyeds owned a pir, yet they all wore a charm, including even the alumnus of the Multan college. He had got his at Meshed in Persia, where he had gone with three others on a pilgrimage, a comparatively easy journey now, since the train takes the pilgrim to Duzdap, and a motor takes him on the remaining 625 miles to Meshed. Six others of the seventeen present had been on a pilgrimage, two to Mecca, one to Kerbela, and three to Meshed. But this is more characteristic of the Seyyed than of the ordinary cultivator. Speaking of pirs, they mentioned that two years ago a Jat had set up as a pir not far away, and that people were coming to him from the central Punjab and even Karachi. His favourite remedy was to inhale from a bottle of water containing a spell and puff out his breath on the mureed.

Chamar, Sweeper, and Dung-cakes

A curious feature of the south-west is the absence of the Chamar, and, since he became a Muhammadan and called himself Musalli, of the sweeper. When an animal round here dies, the neighbourhood has to be searched to find some criminal tribesman to skin it; and if none can be found, as occasionally happens, the animal is buried skin and all, for skinning is not a thing that the zemindar will do for himself. As to the sweeper, house and byre are kept clean by servants, or if no servant is kept, by the cultivator's wife. Night soil has not to be removed, as the fields are always used. Similarly, dung-cakes are made by the wives of the servants or the wife of the cultivator, as the case may be. But they are only used to simmer the milk, and even this is not done by those who value their manure.

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[1] Judges xvii. 10. Cf. also *Odyssey* xviii. 360.

Poultry

A small unnecessary expense, and one it would seem common to the whole province, is the buying of baskets which could equally well be made at home. Here they are bought from people called Mors. More sensible is the habit, said to be general in the district, of keeping a fowl or two, mainly to have meat handy in case of an unexpected guest. Few trouble to keep more, as they eat the young crops and make a mess of their surroundings. Two Jats, who live over 30 miles from Multan, have recently started dealing in eggs. They buy them at a pice[1] each and sell them for two in Multan. They take them 7 miles on foot to Shujabad and then 25 miles by lorry. As this costs seven annas each way, they do not go in till they have collected a large number, which can hardly mean very fresh eggs for Multan. This, however, does not seem to have interfered with their business.

[14 MILES]

February 2nd. ADI BAGH *to* SHUJABAD

Last night, at 11 p.m., the rafters of the bungalow began to creak and the notices on the walls to swing—an earthquake, but fortunately a mild one.

Landlords

The striking feature of to-day's march was the large number of mango groves, many of them new. These show the landlord at his best, and suggest a higher standard in this respect than anything I have come across elsewhere. 'There are many owners in the district,' says the gazetteer, 'and some of them are careful managers. Many, however, are careless and extravagant, and heavy indebtedness is a common incident of families with large rent rolls.'[1] Then speaking of the large owners in the Kabirwala tahsil, through which we have just marched, it adds: 'The majority are in debt from Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000, and a few owe anything from Rs.5,000 to a lakh of rupees.' I noted in the case of Jhang that a landlord who is in debt is likely to be of very little use to either land or tenant, and this is probably true of landlords in general, unless of course the debt is incurred from some productive purpose. An official, who knows both Jhang and Kabirwala, says that there is little to choose between the landlords of either. Agreeing with him, another official said that the big landlords—there are 19 in the tahsil who pay Rs.1,000 in land revenue—were more powerful than 'officers', that they inspired such fear in their tenants that they could take from them what service they pleased, that they eat up the lands of the smaller folk, and rarely let their tenants stay long on a well for fear they should assert a right of occupancy. Few tenants, indeed, stayed more than a few years, and those who stayed over ten years were rare. Other informants in a position to know say if on the whole the relations between landlord and tenant are good, it is less owing to the virtue of the landlord than to the ignorance and the docility of the tenant. The landlord, they add, takes his full meed of free service whenever he needs it; for instance, when he is marrying a son or a daughter or has a big shoot; and it is given uncomplainingly, because it is traditional, and in this remote part of the world modern forces have so far had but little effect upon tradition. The tradition, no doubt, arose in the days when a tenant required protection of all kinds and gladly gave services in return for it. But now that the greater security of modern life renders the need for protection less, the services are felt to be more irksome. The absentee landlord is therefore preferred to the one who lives on his land; for then there is only one person, the agent, to be served: otherwise there are two. This in itself tells a tale, for if landlords as a class were ready to help their tenants, the man who lived on his land would naturally be preferred to the absentee. Nor is the landlord popular with the smaller proprietor, for the big man is always on the look-out to add to his acres by buying him up if he can.

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[1] A quarter of an anna, i.e. about a farthing.

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[1] *Multan Gaz.*, 1924, p. 206.

The Hindu Landowner

As in Jhang, there are good landlords as well as bad: in fact, probably more than in Jhang, for debt in Multan is not so heavy and widespread, and the atmosphere is more enlightened. The latter is largely due to the influence of the Hindu landowner, who, as in Jhang, is generally an Arora and nearly always a member of a trading caste. The Hindu trading community, with a quarter of the cultivated area of the district, owns proportionately more than it does in any other district in the province.[1] In the Shujabad tahsil it owns over 36 per cent,[2] and the results are astonishing. Not only have a large number of wells been sunk, but many embankments have been made, and mango trees innumerable planted, generally in groves, but often in lines to screen a field, and sometimes even to reclaim land where saltpetre lies as thick and white as new-fallen snow. I have seen nothing so good anywhere on this tour, and for once felt that the land was being both developed and embellished. Yet here we have dropped to less than five inches of rain. The rain merely serves to round off the work of canal and well. The canals are not the perennial canals of the colonies but the inundation canals of the south-west, which run only when the rivers are in summer flood; and as these floods rise and fall most capriciously, there is no depending upon their supply, and the aid of the well must from time to time be invoked in the hot weather just as it must be entirely relied upon in the cold. And in the hot weather all must be done under a scorching sun. Cultivation therefore is most laborious and requires incessant supervision, which the Hindu owners give in the fullest measure. Amongst the larger are two or three of the most diligent and enterprising landlords in the province.[1] Some are so careful of their properties that they make their agents submit regular diaries; and last year one is popularly reported to have ordered 100,000 mango trees. Amongst the smaller, many cultivate with their own hands, and in a single zail[2] fifty wells are said to be farmed in this way. The effect of all this is widespread, and many Muhammadan landowners are planting mango groves and giving a new attention to their lands. In this tract, writes the settlement officer, the larger landlords supervise their properties better 'than in any other part of the district'.[3] And one of the most trustworthy of my informants says that of the big men —there are 23 in the tahsil who pay more than Rs.1,000 in land revenue—about 25 per cent assist their tenants out of some feeling of sympathy, and another 50 per cent do the same because they see that it is to their advantage to do so: only 25 per cent do nothing.

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[1] *Multan Gaz.*, 1924, p. 100.

[2] *Multan and Shujabad A. R.*, 1920, p. 18.

A remarkable Landowner

Finding myself amongst a group of landowners at Shujabad, I asked them which had lost most influence, the landlord, the pir, or the money-lender. They agreed that the money-lender had suffered most, and that the landlord was as strong as ever. I warned them that this would not last long. Look how the schools are spreading, and the labourer's children will soon be there. 'Yes,' said one, 'schools are most harmful.' A member of this group, not the last speaker, is one of the keenest farmers and best co-operators in the district, and his record and character are so typical of much that is best in the Punjab village that he deserves more than a passing word. A Seyyed and the owner of 800 acres (only 150 under cultivation), he is the president of one of the oldest Banking Unions in the province. No one in the Punjab, and probably no one in India, can have been associated longer with the co-operative movement, for he was secretary to a society started near here by Sir Edward Maclagan and Captain Crosthwaite in 1895, some years before the first Co-operative Societies Act was passed. And he has been 'co-operating' ever since, though, owing to the nature of the neighbourhood, with less success than his perseverance deserves. He has not had much education in the modern sense of the word and speaks no English, but thanks to a shrewd common sense and a certain force of character he has achieved far more than the average graduate of to-day. A good example of his character is this. An official was charged with dishonesty. The case turned upon a document which happened to be in the Seyyed's possession. The official had powerful friends, some of whom did their best to help him. Three or four came to the Seyyed and said (I give the story in the Seyyed's own words): 'Be wise and give up the receipt.' A lawyer urged: 'Conceal the receipt and let your statement be a little false.' The official's father, a man of position, came by night and begged for the document. Finally, when it had been handed over to the authorities and the case was decided, neighbours and influential acquaintances taunted him with what he had done. And what he had done was to get a rogue dismissed. The story illustrates the difficulties of straight dealing in village life.

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[1] 'The Chowdhris of Shujabad are renowned for their enterprise, business-like habits, and successful agriculture' (*Multan Gaz.*, p. 88).

[2] Shujabad.

[3] *Multan and Shujabad A. R.*, p. 28.

Who taught you to speak the truth, I asked, for few get teaching in real religion? 'My father feared God and gave me a tutor, who also feared God. The tutor told me to speak the truth and nothing but the truth for forty days. I did this twice while he lived, and a third time after his death. In this way I gained the habit. In all my life I have had no guidance from any maulvi, but two or three years ago I began to listen to Nur Fakir, who said—don't call Hindus heretics and polytheists (*kafir* and *mushrik*): treat all alike. Mullahs are men without faith: do not listen to them, nor pray behind them: rather pray apart.' Like the Sikh priest I saw in the village Gurdwara in Lyallpur, this fakir is a potter's son, and though he still cultivates a little land, he has become a pir and is an instance of the way new pirs still arise. He is already credited with miraculous powers of healing. The Seyyed says he has followed the fakir's advice about Hindus, and that he and two Arora neighbours attend each other's marriages and funerals.

Co-education and Pardah

The Seyyed has grave doubts as to the value of the education that is being given to the peasant. For all that, with the generosity that is characteristic of village life he has given both land and building for a local school, and every harvest sets aside the produce of one well and half the produce of another to help the poorer students. He is now experimenting with co-education, and his own daughter and six other girls are being taught with boys of their own age. He did not know how long this could go on, but hoped it would be possible up to the middle standard. As to pardah, the more important families observed it, and far more strictly than was necessary according to the Shariat,[1] which merely said that those things which were 'zebaish' —an ornament to women—must be veiled. The question is whether the face is zebaish—a delicate question indeed! The burqa could not be right, since the Koran bade a woman keep her eyes lowered in the presence of those before whom she must go veiled, and this was impossible out of doors in a burqa. His family, therefore, had given it up seven or eight years ago, and those whose minds were free (*azád-khiál*) had done the same. These were few in his village; only his brother and the head master of the school. They had no intention of giving up pardah, but refused to go beyond what was enjoined by the Koran. The Seyyed said that his eldest daughter, who was married to a master, kept all the family accounts including those of his land. She has evidently inherited some of her father's character; for a month ago at a family council, in which she was the leading spirit, it was decided to give up wearing jewellery, and the family jewellery was then and there put away in a box. Now they are thinking of selling it and investing the proceeds. In such a family it is natural to find that extravagant expenditure on marriages has been given up. It used to be the custom to give the guests two or three meals and to entertain them with the singing and dancing of nautch-girls. Now only one meal is given, and nautch-girls play no part at all. The Seyyed also prides himself upon having given up the barter system of marriage and upon not having betrothed any of his children before they reached the years of discretion. In all this he is more than abreast of the times. But in one respect he is old fashioned: he has married four wives, of whom three are alive.

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[1] The religious law of Islam.

Like one or two other landowners I have met on this tour, the Seyyed is a hakim as well as a farmer. He learnt the art from his uncle, and has been practising most of his life. He has four or five patients a day and is assisted by his eldest daughter, who prepares his prescriptions. Perhaps the most remarkable point about him is that, though he is sixty, he is trying to pass the vernacular examination of Munshi Fazal. In this he is as persevering as Robert the Bruce's spider, for though he has failed five years running, he means to appear again next year. Men like this are the salt of the countryside.

Vox mulieris, vox Dei

A surprising point mentioned by the Seyyed was that his daughter kept the family accounts. I have come across this kind of thing in Burma, but did not expect to find it in Muhammadan Multan. It is a good example of the diversity of Indian village life and is typical of an area in which, despite what has just been said about pardah, the position of women is remarkably free. 'Except in the cities and among the Seyyeds and Sheikhs, they enter freely into conversation with men, greet them by shaking hands and are in many respects on a level with them.' [1] In the household their position is expressed by a pithy saying, which may almost literally be rendered 'vox mulieris, vox Dei'.[2] Amongst both rich and poor most of the money transactions pass through the woman's hands. 'It is she who decides what the family shall eat and how much the husband shall spend. The marriages, too, are mainly settled by her, and the men have merely to consent.'[3] Moreover, she accompanies the bridegroom when he goes with the 'barát' to the house of the bride, a thing she would not do in the central Punjab. Not long ago one of my staff asked a member of a society how much he owed it. He had not the least idea, but said he would ask his wife. He returned in half an hour with the correct figure.

An early Bank and an Arbitration Society

This is a place of remarkable men. Another Seyyed who came to see me was president of the co-operative society started in 1895, and is now, thirty-four years later, president of one of the best arbitration societies in the province. It would be difficult to say which is the more remarkable society of the two. The earlier one embraced the Seyyeds of twenty-two villages and hamlets and was registered in Calcutta. Each of its fifty or sixty members contributed Rs.40, in addition to which the society obtained a deposit of Rs.1,000 from its president, and three loans of the same amount, one from a local money-lender, and two from Government. All this occurred ten years before co-operation was officially launched. The arbitration society, which is on the lines already described,[1] has 367 members—sixty of them Hindus—and since its start two years ago has decided fifty-one disputes and recovered Rs.900 without recourse to the courts. Thirty-one of these cases were decided by arbitration: the rest were compromised. The arbitrators are chosen from a panel of twelve, which includes three Hindus. In fourteen cases Hindu and Muhammadan were opposed, but all the cases were satisfactorily settled. This shows that even in the south-west, where relations between the two great communities have sometimes been strained, there is no reason why Hindu and Muhammadan should not live amicably together. In favour of this is the fact that in this area the Hindu is still recognized as an integral part of the rural community. In spite of the communal riots that occurred in Multan in 1927, there is very little communalism in the countryside, though as usual plenty of faction.

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[1] *Multan Gaz.*, p. 83.

[2] *Hukm-i-joruji bih az hukm-i-Khuda.*

[3] *Multan Gaz.*, p. 84.

An outspoken critic

Two others who have come to see me during the week may be mentioned here. One, a fine broad-chested Pathan, plunged into politics at once. 'Since elections have come in,' he said, 'the zemindars have had great trouble. If you give your vote for one side, you are accounted an enemy of the other; even if you drink tea with an acquaintance, it is the same. The Sirkar has done a bad thing to bring this in, and in doing so has not thought of the zemindar.' He spoke with scorn of certain important pirs. 'Most people are under their influence; and many years will pass before there is change: but the more educated say—we are all creatures of God. Why then should a pir come between us and Him?' He spoke bitterly, too, of the exactions of the Hindu money-lender. 'He is our enemy.' Yet a little later he admitted that a Hindu worth Rs.20,000 would sit deferentially at his feet, while a big Muhammadan landlord might not even salaam him.

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[1] p. 113.

A Pir Landowner

Another visitor was the head of a well-known family of pirs and the owner of large estates, which are well managed. He is a complete contrast to the last. The Pathan would be happy on either horse or camel, but the Pir is a man of gentle polished manners with the small feet of one unaccustomed to walk, suggesting the court rather than the country. Two years at a college have given him some education but not much English. Though pirs of note, he and his brothers do not do piri-mureedi, for their fortunes are ample; but fifty or sixty of their relatives do it and travel abroad. His family keep the strictest pardah, but to mitigate its confinement he has made a pardah tennis court. His wife is of good family and educated up to the middle standard. Their marriage recently cost him Rs.30,000, a figure which did not include what was spent on the other side. He showed me the remains of the open-air kitchens improvised to cook for his 8,000 guests. I asked him how he liked life in the country. He said there was no society, and that apart from a college student there was no one of any education within 20 miles. We talked a little of recent events in Afghanistan. At first, the people of the neighbourhood were against Amanullah, but since he had revoked his reforms and lost his throne, they judged him indulgently. The frontier Pathans who had passed through were less indulgent. They could not forgive him for having tampered with the laws of Islam, and even said that the real Amanullah had died in Europe, and that some heretic impostor had come back in his place.

We inspected the usual bank *en route*. When asked what was the advantage of it, one member said: 'The money-lender wants a present of fodder or the loan of a cart; he also deducts the 'chilkána' and keeps us waiting for our money. But here we salaam, and off we go with our loan.' The chilkana is the discount taken when the loan is made. That this is commonly done was confirmed later by an Arora who came to see me.

[13 MILES]

February 3rd. SHUJABAD *to* KHANGARH

It seemed colder than ever last night, and the cold woke me more than once. Whenever I woke I heard the droning lullaby of the Persian wheel. Hardy, indeed, must the Punjab peasant be both in winter and in summer.

Possessed Women

One of those who rode with me to-day was a pir. In deference to his father he gave up piri-mureedi five or six years ago. There is no doubt that the best opinion of the countryside emphatically condemns piri-mureedi. My companion said he had known only one good pir, and this pir had never tried to cast out jinns. Twice he had seen pirs trying to cast them out of women. On the first occasion, a woman who believed herself possessed was sleeping on a bed inside a shrine. The pir beat her as she slept with a stick, and as she did not waken, it was clear that the jinn was still there. The pir then heated a gridiron (*chol*) and was preparing to apply it to her neck, when she prudently sat up and asked for some water. Her husband inquired her name, and as she gave it correctly, it was now clear the jinn had left her. The second case was the wife of a carpenter. The pir made her stand up and slapped her hard, and the jinn, evidently a sensitive fellow, left her at once. The local chronicle describes the process of casting out jinns in somewhat greater detail. The possessed women 'take their seats and begin to sway their bodies backwards and forwards, gradually increasing in violence. The excitement is kept up by a drum being played. The *khalífa* (or pir) goes round and lashes the women with a whip, and pours scented oil on them. As each woman gets weary, the khalifa pronounces some words and sprinkles a little water over her. The jinn is cast out. The woman becomes quiet, and is dragged away in an exhausted state by her friends.'[1] This was written in the eighties. There does not seem to have been much change since. And as in those days, many women still develop jinns simply in order to get taken to the annual fair held at most of these shrines.[2]

Ordeal by Pir

My companion also spoke about charms. A common method is to write the charm on a bit of paper and dip the latter in water. The ink dissolves and the water, charged with the charm, is drunk. Sometimes pirs are consulted as to who is responsible for the disappearance of a bullock or cow. The suspected are summoned, and the pir, to discover the thief, rubs the palm of his hand on the back of each in turn. If a man is innocent, no mark is left, but if he is guilty, the pir's hand leaves the thief's name imprinted on his back. My informant once saw this done, and a man was branded whom he knew to be innocent. What the dishonest pir does on these occasions is to write the name of the person whom he wishes to incriminate on the palm of his hand with the juice of the ak.[3] This remains invisible till the hand is rubbed on the person's back.

The Crossing of the Chenab

To-day I crossed the Chenab. There is nothing more exhilarating in the Punjab than the crossing of one of its larger rivers. Nowhere, not even at sea, does one feel more palpably the sensation of space; and here in the clear radiant air all the vastness and beauty of the world seemed to be present, and man but a speck in the universe. Widely scattered on the river plain were little mud-plastered cabins, roofed, as it seemed, with gold. Nearly all had a new thatch, for last year a summer flood had swept scores away. The two I examined were tenanted by humble folk who had leased adjoining wells from a big landlord. The first had been forty years on his well, and his father and grandfather had lived there before him. He had four or five acres of his own, but all were mortgaged. The flood had brought them very low, and their money-lender had refused to lend them any more. What was his rate? 'Twenty-five per cent,' he replied. 'He is wrong,' said his wrinkled wife, who was standing behind him: 'he knows nothing: I know everything: the rate is *paisa rupiya*;[1] and chilkana, too, is taken'—an unexpected example of the fact noted yesterday that it is the women who do the business. Had not their landlord helped them? 'No, he has given no help at all,' replied the wife. 'Don't speak ill of him,' said the husband in a low voice, evidently afraid that her remark might be repeated. 'Why should I not say so', remonstrated the wife, 'when he has given no help?' A boy had just been born to a member of the household. The mother, they said, would rest for ten days and work again on the eleventh.[2] A midwife, the wife of a water-carrier, had come in to help and would be given a rupee. 'I will also give her this cloth,' said the wife pointing to a dirty homespun chaddar she was wearing. These people were evidently very poor; yet, though they made the thatch for their houses, like the villagers of two days ago they bought their baskets from the Mors.

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[1] *Muzaffargarh Gaz.*, 1884, p. 64.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 64.

[3] *Calotropis gigantea.*

We crossed the Chenab in a large flat-bottomed boat, and stepping ashore on the other side were welcomed by men of Muzaffargarh.

[9 MILES]

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[1] $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

[2] Austrian peasants tell me that their wives start work again after a week, sometimes earlier.

X. MUZAFFARGARH AND THE INDUS RIVERAIN

The Old Standard of Living

February 4th. HALT

The District

If the influence of money-lender, landlord, and pir in Multan is less than it is in Jhang, in Muzaffargarh it is greater than in either. And the consequences are disastrous. In no other district in the Punjab is the peasant so listless, feckless, and depressed, and nowhere else is his standard of living so low. Whatever the basic causes of this,[1] it is certain that in the past money-lender, landlord, and pir have exploited his necessities and his fears to the full. The exactions of the money-lender are notorious, and in his way the landlord's record is as bad; while the pir has played upon superstition with such effect that 'with the large majority' he has 'taken the place of Allah'.[2] In short, in this district, we see rural life at its worst.

This was painfully evident in the first bank I saw this evening. Though it was thirteen years old, and most of the members were more or less educated, they knew nothing of their by-laws and did not even possess a copy of them. They sat stiffly before us on chairs, hardly able to answer a question. It was a relief to get to the next society, a grain bank only a year old. The president, slim, polished, intelligent, and beautifully dressed in a long coat of French grey with shining buttons, was a large landlord and a complete contrast to the more common type which, vast, bloated, and self-important, greets one less with the hand than with the belly. The members, nearly all tenants, sat on the ground in a large, cheerful, badly-dressed mass. The president, whom we may call the Mian, pointed to the mango trees above us, and said there would be no fruit this year owing to the frost. As everywhere else, the frost had turned their rich summer green to autumn-red and brown—beautiful but devastating. The wheat, too, is seared and the peas ruined. We put the members through their by-laws, and though nearly all were illiterate, they knew them well. As markets are distant, they make their repayments to the bank in grain, and last hot weather over 900 maunds were stored by the society and loaned out in the autumn for seed and food—a fortunate arrangement, for between the two seasons the price of wheat rose 50 per cent. Over 400 maunds were stored in the riverain (*bet*) and were in great peril from a September flood, but were saved by an all-night effort.

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[1] For these see the author's *op. cit.*, ch. vi.

[2] *Muzaffargarh Gaz.*, 1884, p. 62.

Tenant and Labourer

These people are used to working at night, for in Po and Magh[1] the wells have to be worked night and day. 'One whose well is working', says the proverb, 'gets no peace or sleep.'[2] Night is divided into two shifts of six hours each. Many work all day and half the night. For this no overtime is paid to the labourer, though all he gets is *one* meal a day and a maund of wheat a month, with the usual blanket and pair of shoes once a year and fodder for one animal. This is what the Mian gives his men, and even when no meal is given, no one in the neighbourhood gives more than Rs.10 p.m. 'The scale of wages', writes the Settlement Officer, 'is rather higher in this tahsil than in the rest of the district, but cannot if commuted into money average more than about Rs.85 a year.'[3] Nevertheless, says the Mian, the labourer is better off than the tenant,[4] because he is always certain of his income and is rarely in debt since no one will lend to him. The Mian is that rare thing in this country—a good landlord. He says he never turns out a tenant, and many stay on his wells for years. One of those present said his family had been on the same well for five generations. Another exclaimed: 'The Mian Sahib was not born when I first got land.' In the last two years the Mian has sunk three wells and made a number of small irrigation tanks (*talao*).

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[1] From the middle of December to the middle of February.

[2] *Jinhan jutte khuh, unhan de sukh na sutte ruh.*

[3] *Muzaffargarh A. R.*, 1924, p. 11.

[4] 'On the whole the field labourer is better off than the poor agriculturists' (*Muzaffargarh Gaz.*, 1908, p. 100).

Money-lender and Pir

It was generally agreed that the influence of the pir and the money-lender had greatly declined, the one as much as the other, but not that of the landlord. A pir who was sitting there said that he got much less from his mureeds than before. 'The old time has gone; understanding has come, and now they take more from us than we do from them.' There was general laughter at this. They were very down on the money-lender and said that even if the land were mortgaged or jewellery pawned, the common rate was 18¾ per cent (*paisa rupiya*) with a one anna chilkana[1] as well. Then there was the custom of 'banoti', by which a loan was converted into grain at some arbitrary rate and entered in the account accordingly. Discussing the remedies for these troubles, we found that of themselves the members were reducing their expenditure on marriages. In terms of the central Punjab this is not large—for a person of 10 or 12 acres probably no more than Rs.200—but, as in Gurgaon where about the same is spent, it is much more than the ordinary peasant can afford.

There was an extraordinary difference between the two societies—the difference between stagnant and running water; the one blocked with the weeds of the past, the other flowing with a new life. The sun had set, and the last light was glowing in the west before we left, and as we rode back across the fields the stars shone overhead.

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[1] See p. 255.

February 5th. KHANGARH *to* KHINJHAR

Repairing a Road

To-day we saw an incredible thing—coolies digging up a field of young wheat to provide the road with a top-dressing of earth. In one place they had dug to a depth of twenty-six inches (measured with a rule). A little later we met one of the contractors, a lousy-looking knave with cheeks like balloon tyres. He claimed the right to take earth from any roadside field, crop or no crop, to a depth of one foot. All along the road the fields had been dug. For the most part they were bare, but at one point a strip of wheat several hundred yards long had been mercilessly removed. Some one with a newspaper mind explained that it had been done 'in the interest of the general public'. We got hold of two of the owners, a Muhammadan and a Hindu. Both said they had not been paid. Had they not complained to the Deputy Commissioner? Not yet, owing to the cold, but they would now petition him. A third, who had also received nothing, had not complained either, though his field had been dug up a year ago. The contractor, he said, had threatened to get him listed by the police as a bad character if he pressed for payment: doubtless an idle threat, but to the rustic mind full of sinister possibilities. He had preferred, therefore, to say nothing and get out his bullocks and level the land. This is no easy matter with half the field dug a foot deeper than the rest, and near Multan I found eight pairs of bullocks at work on the task.[1] The whole thing recalls the enormities of the French *ancien régime*, and I suspect that, as in the present case, many of these enormities were due to the petty tyranny of unscrupulous underlings.[2]

Mullahs

In a village on the way I found a boy wearing a silver amulet which had been given him by a pir who comes here every year from Mecca. He had been afraid of the dark, but thanks to the charm feared it no longer. The mullah of the village was a peasant proprietor, and like the peasant in Ambala who became a mullah owing to a damaged leg,[1] he had become one because his eyesight prevented him working in the fields. Some might think good eyes as necessary for reading the Koran as for cultivating the land. But that is not the case, for all that is needed with the Koran is to learn the Arabic text by heart and call oneself 'hafiz',[2] and this the mullah had done. To understand it as well is a refinement which only an infinitesimal number of the mullahs in the district—at most 1 per cent—have troubled to acquire. In Mianwali, farther north, it is much the same, and a Seyyed from Bhakkar tells me that in the whole of that tahsil there are only five mullahs who can interpret the Koran with understanding and intelligence. It is comparatively rare to find an owner of land established as mullah, for the ordinary cultivator has neither time nor care for anything but his fields and leaves everything else to the village trader or menial. So it comes about that both mullah and midwife generally belong to one of the lower castes, and in the western Punjab the mullah is usually a weaver, and the midwife often a weaver's wife. In spite of this, the influence of the mullah is great and sometimes bad, and the farther south one goes, the greater and the worse it becomes.

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[1] p. 258.

[2] A line to the Deputy Commissioner rectified the matter at once. Compensation is payable and apparently paid when claimed, but claims are not always made.

The Old Standard of Living

In the evening we walked across the fields to a Biloch village, which only a fringe of date palms separated from a waste of sandhills. Palms and sand generally connote a low standard of living, and here the standard was lower than anything I have yet come across on this tour. With difficulty were two plain wooden bedsteads found for us to sit on, and one of them crashed under the weight of a not very large zaildar. Five of the twenty-five members present had only one shirt, yet all were owners of land. One of them owned 30 acres. Have you no other shirt put away in a box? I asked. 'Where is the box in my house?' was the ironic reply; and later when we had a look at several houses, we did not see a single coffer or trunk. Likely enough there were some, but there cannot be many and they are not displayed as in Multan and Jhang. The interiors of the houses we saw suggested a very low standard of life—the life of the primitive peasant—dark, sooty, brutish. The room where the president lived was so dark that I could see nothing, and so full of smoke from the fire which was cooking his dinner that I could hardly keep my eyes open. There were few metal vessels in any of the houses, and there were no possessions which were not absolute necessities. Though debt was not heavy (about Rs.180 a head), there was the usual tale of depredation at the threshing-floor. One who owned 5 acres got only 5 maunds of wheat from last year's crop, and the money-lender took it all away. Another with 4 acres was left 4 maunds out of 20; a third with 1 acre, only 2 maunds out of 12. All three cases were chosen at random. To eke out their living, most members are working on the Kinjhar road—digging up their neighbours' fields! They get their two meals a day but have to live on the inferior grains—bajra, jowar, &c.—flavoured with greens (*ság*), which is made here from the leaves of the turnip. Rice too is eaten, but no wheat or ghi. Those who make ghi, sell it. A foolish question as to whether they ate meat elicited the logical retort: 'When we don't eat wheat, how can we get meat?' Three or four keep a few poultry, but no one sells eggs. A small but significant sign of the general poverty was the fact that they had given their pir, who had just visited them, only two annas each instead of the usual rupee. The village, say my staff, is typical of the tahsil.

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[1] p. 84.

[2] See p. 3.

As we walked back across the fields, the Sulemán Hills, which we sighted for the first time this morning, shone clear and blue in the light of the setting sun. In height, beauty, and fame, they are not to be compared with the Himalayas, but in their suggestion of the Frontier and of what lies beyond, they are more romantic and stirring.

[11 MILES]

February 6th. KINJHAR *to* MAHTAM

The Indus Riverain To-day we crossed the Indus, the Grand Trunk road of the western Punjab. Setting out at one o'clock under a hot sun—the cold snap of last week is over—we soon left all regular cultivation behind, but now and then passed a well at work with a homestead or two round it. At first these were made of mud-plastered walls roofed with thatch; then, as we approached the river, entirely of brushwood and riverain grass. At one of them, near Kinjhar, we found a Jat who owned 15 acres and was Rs.400 in debt. He had planted eight mango trees in line, but, alas, the frost had killed five. His one-room abode was clean, but like the houses of yesterday contained nothing savouring of superfluity—hardly even a metal vessel—and the grain bins were empty. Like so many others, he was buying bajra for food. He had two pairs of bullocks but only one shirt. The thatching of his house and the grass-plaited baskets were home-made, but the wicker-work baskets were bought. Another unnecessary expense was the seer per maund he gave the money-lender for weighing his grain, which he could well have weighed himself.

Coming to an island well which was being cultivated with the help of a labourer, we inquired how much the latter got. The answer was a maund of grain once a month (worth about five rupees) and the usual blanket and pair of shoes at the end of the year. The other side of the river the rate was slightly higher—1¼ maunds.

Blessing of Camels Having read yesterday in an old gazetteer that to protect their camels from illness people took them once a year to a shrine to be blest, I asked the first man we met with a string of camels whether he did this. Yes, he said, he took them to his pir and paid him a rupee. This, it seems, is common both in Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan. Cattle too are taken, and when this is done, the evening supply of milk is given to the pir. A recent Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan relates how he once met a large herd being taken to a shrine to be blest as a precaution against rinderpest, of which there was a lot about. 'I endeavoured to reason gently with the graziers but was told that the ways of God and his ministers were wonderful.'[1] This form of insurance is by no means unknown in the west for horses and cattle are often blest in Italy, and sometimes even motor-cars in France. Another custom of the tract is that, when butter will not set, a charm is tied to the earthen vessel (*matka*) in which the butter is made or to the churn itself. Similarly, when the grain is piled on the threshing-floor in golden heaps, a charm in a split stick is stuck into each heap to keep the evil spirits away. This appears to be done throughout the Punjab.

The Crossing of the Indus

We reached the river at three and embarked in a boat of Homeric proportions. High and square in both prow and stern, it was propelled by four men, two on each side, with poles long enough to plumb the depths of a great river. Such must have been the boats in which Alexander's home-sick army did their first stage homewards. The ponies had some difficulty in getting on board, for, as with the English ferries of the eighteenth century, there was no contrivance for the purpose and we had to resort to what Arthur Young calls 'the abominable operation of beating them till they leap into them',[2] and as the boat could not come close up to the bank, my mare nearly slithered into the river. We pushed off, and the men had to work with a will, as our first course lay up stream. 'Let us call upon Allah,' said their leader, and they all shouted in musical voices—

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[1] Evidence of Mr. W. R. Wilson, I.C.S., before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, *op. cit.*, viii, § 13.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

Ullaho bhi Ullah—God help us, God help us. 'And now upon our pir.' And the shout went up again—*madad pir*, *madad pir*—to our help, O Pir, to our help. The music of deep-toned cattle bells floated across the water from the farther shore, and gliding down the stream like a vast white-winged bird came another square-prowed boat with a large oblong sail stretched across its single mast—a noble sight.

Education and Religion

It took us over half an hour to get across, and we spent the time talking about pardah, mullahs, and pirs. Could many expound the Koran? 'That', said one of the headmen who had come to meet us, 'was an affair of big maulvis.' Some of these big maulvis now come from Lahore and elsewhere and bid Muhammadans take neither food nor drink from Hindus, and Hindu preachers come too, and bid Hindus have nothing to do with Muhammadans. This began here three or four years ago, but in the towns it is ten or twelve years since Muhammadans gave up taking water from Hindus. All agreed that the change was due to the influence and example of 'the educated', and when I asked what was done in this part of the world, one replied: 'The ignorant (*jáhil log*) drink.' That it should be a mark of ignorance to take a cup of water from a neighbour who is of a different religion is enough to make angels weep. Lucretius' line returns to mind—'Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!' It was a relief to find that the peasants who jogged along beside us on the other side took both food and drink from Hindus, and that in these two 'backward' districts of Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan the more substantial Hindu and Muhammadan families still entertain each other at their weddings. One of the headmen remarked that fifteen or sixteen Hindus had come to his, and a member of my staff who comes from Mianwali said this kind of thing was even commoner there than here. On the subject of pardah, all agreed that it was good, but they admitted that girls of non-pardah families sometimes refused to be married into pardah families. A day or two ago a maulvi, who goes about preaching that women should keep pardah but give up shopping, said that for the last few years women were not allowed to appear at the mosque, imámbárah[1] or majlis,[2] but had special arrangements made for them. Many coloured is the glass through which the new light shines. Landing, we found ourselves in a country of elephant grass stretching westwards in a dense mass broken only by patches of rape and wheat, where semi-nomad man had sunk his well and raised his hut. This was the district of Dera Ghazi Khan. From May to September most of the country is under water, and very beautiful it is when the golden grass is in flower and a white pennon waves on every stem for miles.

An Impoverished Village

The sun had set in cloud before we reached the distant fringe of palms which spoke of more settled life. A few miles on we found the members of two banks assembled in a mango grove. It was soon too dark to look at registers and books, and we talked instead. Of the thirty present about half were landowners, but none owned more than 25 acres. As the rice harvest had failed, nearly all were buying grain for food and doing it on credit. For every maund of bajra taken now 1½ maunds of wheat would have to be paid back in May. Even allowing for the difference of price, this arrangement works out at about 50 per cent per annum. They would have to go on buying in this way till harvest-time. They naturally only eat meat on special occasions like the Id, and rarely butter or ghi. Those who have it sell it, or exchange it for grain. We asked three men what had happened to them at the last spring harvest. The biggest owner said that the money-lender had impounded one-third of his 100 maunds of wheat. The next, who owned 10 acres, had been left only 16 out of 40 maunds; and the third, also a ten-acre man,

[1] The place where Shias celebrate the Muharrum.

[2] Where Shias meet together to chant elegies in honour of Husein.

said that everything had been taken to meet his debt of Rs.500, and that he had been driven to work on the local canal.

[16 MILES]

February 7th. MAHTAM *to* GHAZI GHAT

Landlords The good kachha road was a treat after yesterday, and as it was strewn with elephant grass, it was also a pleasant sight, looking like a path of gold in the sunlight. As we approached Drama, mango trees began again, a sign of the presence of Hindu owners. Few Hindus in this tahsil cultivate with their own hands, but many farm their land, and every one admits that they do this much better than the Muhammadan owner.[1] Every one admits, too, that a Muhammadan owner who has money to spend commonly uses it not to develop his land but to buy up the small man, a charge that I also heard in Ambala. To such men the Land Alienation Act in restricting the market for sale is a godsend.[2] Neither in Muzaffargarh nor in Dera Ghazi Khan have landlords as a class a good reputation. 'They are all throat stranglers,' said one of those who came to see me to-day, speaking of those in his neighbourhood, and most of those who have expressed an opinion this week have not been much less harsh in their judgement. There are good landlords, of course—we came across one a few days ago, and several could be mentioned in Dera Ghazi Khan—but they are few and far between. There are, it is said, only 5 per cent who do not in one form or another oppress their tenants; for instance, by taking more than their share at the division of the produce, by letting their horses graze in their fields, by impounding their fowls when guests have to be fed, or by running cases against good men who leave them and harassing them till they return. Some even will try to prevent a neighbour, whose land they covet, from getting his canal water at the right time and force him in sheer desperation to sell; and nearly all try to stand in with the police to secure their ends. To such men, 'immunity from law is the breath of life'.[1] The good landlord, on the other hand, not only refrains from evil but does much for his tenants—gives him grain for food and seed free of interest, advances him money to buy cattle, builds him a house (many landlords do not do this), constructs the canal outlets required for his land, settles his disputes, and generally tides him over his difficulties. In the Leiah tahsil (Muzaffargarh) the Muhammadan landlords have begun to improve their lands, but elsewhere few but Hindus do this. In Muzaffargarh the Hindus are 'far the best farmers in the district',[2] and in Dera Ghazi Khan, as in Multan, they lead the way in development. One of those who came to see me to-day was a Hindu landowner, and he provided the first example I have come across on this tour of a zemindar extricating himself unaided from heavy debt. His father left liabilities of over Rs.30,000, and he has now reduced these to Rs.10,000. This shows what can be done when a man is determined to get out of debt. His one advantage was the low rate of interest he had to pay—only 6 per cent—but this advantage he probably owed to his character for good dealing. Except that chilkana is not everywhere deducted, he confirmed what has been set down above about the methods and rates of the money-lender, and as a Hindu speaking of Hindus his confirmation is of value.

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[1] Cf. 'Some of the most careful cultivation is done or supervised by Hindus' (*Dera Ghazi Khan A. R.*, 1919, p. 9): see also *Jampur A. R.*, 1919, p. 12.

[2] For the Land Alienation Act see p. 248 n.

Pirs

Speaking of the trinity that dominate the countryside, he thought that the influence of the pir was greater than that of either money-lender or landlord, though in the last ten years it had declined the most. An official, who belongs to a well-known family of pirs, said much the same a few days ago. In his boyhood—he is a man of thirty—people used to come to the family shrine in their thousands bringing with them their offerings, which often included ornaments of silver and gold. There was much less of this now, and the mureeds of the family, who once numbered two or three hundred thousand, have fallen by 50 per cent. Yet—and this shows how much influence still remains—recently when he visited Khangarh on duty and it became known who he was, some fifty men, women, and children quickly gathered, and pressing round him touched his feet, and each begged a charm. And not long ago one of my staff on visiting a village found a crowd of peasants sitting on the ground round two bedsteads, on which lolled two pot-bellied pirs, one of whom was demanding in a loud voice the gift of a camel or buffalo and threatening to curse the village if neither were given. So dreaded is a pir's curse that the demand was complied with. The pirs had already accumulated two camels, three mares, four hens, and a cow. At the bank inspection to-day there was an old bearded pir in a pale blue-flowered coat and a quilted cap. He appeared quite happy about the piri-mureedi business, and the last time he went on tour came back with the usual booty. This varies from Rs.200 in a year of bad harvests to five or six hundred in a year of good. He has about 200 mureeds and visits them once a year, and there are ten or twelve others in his village who live in the same way. He distributes charms freely, mainly to get people sons, avert the evil eye, and exorcize jinns. For the more stubborn jinns he heats a gridiron (*chol*), but he has never yet had to apply it: the sight of it red-hot frightens the most stubborn away. Many women pretend to jinns in order to get taken to the annual fair or to compass an illicit meeting at a shrine.[1] For such his treatment is a stick and a drubbing. He drove out his last jinn a year ago.

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[1] Herbert Edwardes, *A Year in the Punjab*, ii. 30.

[2] *Muzaffargarh A. R.*, 1924, p. 11.

A famous Shrine

Not many miles away is the famous Muhammadan shrine of Sakki Sarwar, to which Hindus resort as freely as Muhammadans, sometimes, to acquire merit, walking the whole way from Lahore or Amritsar. One of my staff said that as many as 1,600 participated in the offerings made at the annual fair. Doubting so large a figure, I asked the first person we met on the road—a camel-driver—what the number was. He said at once—1,600. I have since looked up the point in the district gazetteer. This says that when the descendants of the three original keepers of the shrine began to multiply, it was decided that not more than 1,650 should participate in the annual offerings. These are therefore divided into 1,650 shares, and all descendants in excess of this number absent themselves from the fair in rotation, seeking a compensating sustenance in the pursuit of piri-mureedi. As between the favoured 1,650 the division is equal, and an infant gets as much as an adult.[1] After the fair most of the able-bodied descendants disperse over the Punjab to visit their mureeds and swell the horde of beggars.

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[1] Cf. *Muzaffargarh Gaz.*, p. 74.

Beggars

All over the province, as this diary shows,[2] the beggar is a nuisance.[3] Here in the western Punjab he is a plague. When crops have been harvested, every road sees him making towards the cornfloor. A member of my staff relates that once on his rounds he stopped five hours at a well and thirteen or fourteen beggars came by, and each received something. In this way a beggar may count upon collecting fifteen or sixteen maunds of grain at each harvest. The power of the beggar as of the pir—the two terms are often synonymous—lies in his curse. This is greatly dreaded by the simple, and the Seyyeds most of all, for is he not the descendant of the Prophet? Even a sweeper beggar has power over the credulous, and an educated Seyyed tells me that he once saw one collecting alms in the streets of Multan by threatening to curse those who gave him nothing. Rolling his bloodshot eyes, he said that he had cursed the wife of a blacksmith so that she died, and her grave had kept burning for seven years afterwards. Fearing greatly, many gave. In the western Punjab, perhaps throughout the province, what with pirs, brahmins, and beggars, the burden imposed upon the peasant by the supposed obligations of religion must be equal to a second land revenue. It is a case of religion gone wrong, and no one would have condemned it more vigorously than the founder of Muhammadanism. 'Verily,' says the Prophet, 'it is better for one of you to take your rope and bring a bundle of wood upon your back and sell it . . . than to beg.' And again: 'Acts of begging are scratches and wounds, by which a man injures his own face.' Yet every fear and hope in the peasant's mind is exploited in the name of religion, and the result is a system of imposture, quackery, and blackmail without parallel, one would think, in any country in the world.

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[1] *Dera Ghazi Khan Gaz.*, 1883–4, p. 53.

[2] pp. 139, 171, 202.

[3] This is not peculiar to the Punjab: cf. 'There is a large army of nomadic and itinerant beggars, who go from village to village' (*The Economic Survey of an Indian Village in the Benares State*, *Indian Journal of Economics*, July 1925, p. 88).

Drama, where we spent the day, is the name given to old Dera Ghazi Khan, once with its gardens and palms 'one of the most lovely spots in the Punjab',[1] but now a place of derelict bungalows and offices, which were deserted when the Indus began to wash away the town. In the evening we set out for Ghazi Ghat and the rail-head on the other side of the river, and once again found ourselves riding along a road strewn with golden grass. We recrossed the Indus, here only 500 yards wide, by a bridge of 41 boats. The sun was setting over the hills of Solomon (Suleman) in a blaze of golden light, and the great river shone like silk shot with many colours. I rejoiced that my lot was set in India. We rode into Ghazi Ghat at dusk, the last stage of the 242 miles from Lyallpur satisfactorily accomplished.

[22 MILES]

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[1] Edwardes, *op. cit.*, x.

XI. ATTOCK

Landlord and Tenant, Arbitration and Mullahs

February 10*th.* BASAL *to* KUNDA

Mianwali

The scene is completely changed, and I am now as far to the north of the Punjab as in Gurgaon I was to the south. The whole of the 8th I spent in the train journeying slowly up the valley of the Indus, with the Suleman Hills on one side and the Thal desert on the other. The desert was desert indeed, and for nearly 100 miles (from Leiah to Kallurkot) looking eastwards one saw nothing but sand-hill and scrub. Wheat never looked greener than when at last we emerged and found ourselves again amongst crops. I heard much about the desert graziers from a fellow-passenger who knew them well. His description recalled Doughty's *Arabia Deserta.* Such is the absence of shelter that the removal of a telegraph line is said to have been objected to on the ground that the poles gave good shade in the hot weather. The people are as thrifty as they are hardy; for, as in Hissar,[1] thrift is forced upon them by the infrequency of good harvests and the frequency of drought. When I asked my companion what the big landlords of Mianwali were like, he replied laconically that most of them were tyrants (*zálim*); and of the mullahs he said that in Bhakkar, the tahsil he knew best, there was not one who could expound the Koran. Yesterday I spent at Mianwali inspecting the co-operative mortgage bank, &c. Like the one at Jhang, the bank operates over the whole district and has a good many defaulters. Harvests are so uncertain and the habit of punctual dealing so rare that regularity of repayment is exceedingly difficult to secure without the exercise of strong pressure. Distances, too, are so great that the proper investigation of claims and the application of the necessary precautions to prevent loans being misapplied involves very heavy work for the directors. In short, the bank illustrates many of the difficulties of co-operative mortgage banking in primitive surroundings, just as the district with its heavy indebtedness[1] is an example of the great need for an institution of the kind. I came on by the night train to Basal, which I reached at 2 a.m. Most cheerful at that cold heartless hour was the sight of blazing logs in the rest-house. After breakfast I set out to ride across the north-west corner of the Punjab.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Leaving the Indus and the Kala Chitta hills behind us, we picked our way across rugged uplands, sparsely cultivated and thinly inhabited, and recalling with their wide-set hills the lonely moorlands of Northumberland, but entirely lacking their abundant grass. Though the rainfall (25 inches) is much higher than in the south-west, there is no suggestion of fertility, for there is no canal and hardly a well. The fruitful mango and palm are absent, and the stunted kikar and ber take their place. Stones abound, and rock and ravine break the terraced fields. In such a country no one could be well off without ample resources. In Talagang, one of the tahsils of the district, '14 acres are barely sufficient to support a family,'[2] and probably twice this area would be needed to support it in comfort. Actually much of the land is owned by landlords and cultivated by tenants, and nearly all who came to see me to-day, both at Basal and at Kunda, were landlords. Their information may be summarized as follows:

Tenants

Tenants change their holdings every four or five years, unless they live in a village which belongs to a single owner. In that case families may farm the same land for generations, since change means leaving the village, a thing that every villager hates.[3] All agreed that constant change was bad for the land—the casual tenant, for instance, is not likely to spend much time on terracing—but all confessed their inability to prevent it, for there is a shortage of tenants and all tenants want the better land. All, too, want the better landlord, and differences between landlords are as marked here as anywhere else. Some, for example those round Kunda, are fair enough, but many, like those in the south-west, squeeze their tenants of all they can get, and in good old feudal fashion levy dues not entered in the revenue papers but sanctioned by custom. This is generally done at a marriage when the large gatherings of guests make 'presents' of sheep, goats, fowls, fodder, and wood more than usually desirable. Tenants would change their farms less frequently if landlords were not constantly trying to entice away each other's tenants, less to obtain a particular tenant than to annoy a particular neighbour.[1] In this respect relations between landlords are, perhaps, less happy than relations between landlord and tenant. The shortage of tenants is the tenant's protection, and on the whole he seems to be much better treated than in the south-west. One reason for this is that fewer landlords are seriously involved in debt. It is easier, therefore, for them to make advances for seed and food to their tenants, and though some important examples to the contrary were named, most appear to do this, and to charge no interest. In times of scarcity like the present—the autumn harvest was almost a complete failure—this is an inestimable boon, for it saves hundreds from borrowing from the money-lender at ruinous rates.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, pp. 116–17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[3] Cf. 'Tenants are not very mobile, and it is rare to find them migrating from one village to another' (*Talagang A. R.*, 1925, p. 22).

Landlords

Though, according to the standards of this country, tenants are on the whole well treated, tenancy does not make for good cultivation. The late Settlement Officer writes: 'When a tenant on poor land knows that he has to pay half the produce to the owner (no uncommon rate), it is very unlikely that he will expend much labour on it. Whether he is an occupancy tenant or a tenant at will, he will usually cultivate just enough to prevent his being ejected, and spend most of his time away earning money in other ways.'[1] This he is often able to do; for many keep carts, bullocks, and donkeys, and drive a profitable trade by carrying goods along one or other of the roads; and the Settlement Officer thinks that it 'is probably the chief reason for the neglect of the cultivation in the tract'. It would be better if, like the German Junkers, more landlords farmed part of their lands themselves. Few of those who came to see me did this, but some were thinking of doing so. That they have not done so in the past is attributed to the fact that they have had plenty to live on: in other words, that they had no need for effort. That some think of doing so in the future is, let us hope, a sign of awakening. Few, too, have introduced any improvement—one had bought a Raja plough, and I heard of others (in Pindigheb) who were making embankments to catch and conserve rain; but as one said: 'Till recently there were few to stir us up. We rarely saw the Bank Inspector, as he had the whole district to look after; but now that there is one in every tahsil, we see him often and he tells us about these things.'[2] Instead of farming the land they already have, several have been buying fresh land on a pretty large scale. One, for instance, had added 200 to his 3,000 acres, and taken another 450 in mortgage. The point is of interest, for much the same thing is going on in the south-west,[3] and for better or worse the process is facilitated by the Land Alienation Act, though it was not one of its objects to do so.

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[1] Cf. *Fatehjang A. R.*, 1926, p. 30.

The question naturally arose as to whether good or bad landlords preponderated. Two good judges, classifying landlords as good, bad, and indifferent, said that in this tahsil (Fatehjang) 10 to 15 per cent were good and about the same proportion bad. By 'good' they meant landlords who advanced money to their tenants and lived on friendly terms with them, and in addition took some interest in their estates. Ten or fifteen per cent may not seem a very high proportion for the good, but at least it is much higher than any estimate given me for Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan.[1] Amongst the bad must be classed many landlords of the Khattar tribe, one of the most important tribes in the district. Though there are numerous exceptions, many are 'idle, dissipated, and extravagant', and 'take little interest in their land and leave everything to their munshis';[2] and not infrequently, it is said, false cases are brought against tenants in order to squeeze more out of them when the produce is weighed.

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[1] *Fatehjang A. R.*, 1926, p. 30.

[2] Government has recently substantially increased the co-operative staff in the district.

[3] See p. 286.

Who is the good Landlord?

In feudal Europe the main justification for the landlord was that he protected his tenants from external attack, and the landlord system was generally strongest where the liability to attack was greatest. The borders between England and Scotland, Germany and Poland, and Russia and Roumania are examples of this. The same is true of the Punjab and is one reason why the big landlord is found all the way down the Indus, a tract always open to attack from the Frontier and distant from central authority. In return for protection the tenant was prepared to do all that a landlord required, and much the same is the case to-day, though the nature of the protection expected is totally different. In the old days, when might was right and man met man with sword or spear, the best landlord was the stoutest fighter. There was no other criterion. But now that summons, warrant, and suit have taken the place of sword and spear, the duty of the good landlord is less clear. When a tenant is involved in strife, whether right or wrong, he still expects his landlord to help him to victory or revenge, as the case may be, by interviewing or writing to all who may be supposed to be able to influence the case; and if from time to time a 'Christmas box' is required to keep the smaller official fry alert and responsive, it is for the landlord rather than the tenant to present it. In popular estimation the good landlord is the man who discharges these not very respectable obligations to the full. What then is a landlord to do who has more modern notions? Is he to face the reproaches of his tenants and put up with the pin-pricks, or worse, of those who are not placated? Or is he to win popular favour by following the line of least resistance and doing as most of his neighbours do? As one landowner remarked, 'It is very difficult to be a good landlord and also to be thought one.' This person's way out of the difficulty is to ascertain the facts of any case that arises and, if the tenant appears to be in the right, to engage him a pleader and pay the fee. But it is only a partial solution, for facts are not always easily ascertained and there is still the question of the Christmas, or rather the Harvest box. One of the best of my informants thought that the landlord's power (*hakumat*) had greatly declined. There were, he said, many things his father could do which would now be impossible. In those days the landlord's word was law, but now a more critical spirit was abroad. Ultimately, he thought, landlords would have to give up part of their land to their tenants to secure themselves in the rest. That, however, was still in the remote future and would probably not come in his day. Meanwhile, feudalism was still strong, and the position of the landlord in the north was quite different from his position amongst the independent yeomen farmers of the central Punjab, where little passed between landlord and tenant but the payment of rent.[1] Intermediate between the two are the Rajputs of the Una tahsil, who are all nursed in feudal traditions. But there, as this journal shows,[2] the feudal edifice is crumbling.

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[1] See p. 286.

[2] *Attock A. R.*, 1925, p. 18.

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[1] Cf. *Punjab Village Survey*, No. 1, 1928, pp. 144–5.

[2] p. 23.

The Tenant's Standard of Living

One of the most interesting of my visitors was a zaildar whose years were three score and ten. He said that the tenant lived pretty much as he did fifty years ago. He made his bread of whatever grain was available, of wheat in summer and of millet (*jowár*) and maize in winter, and ate it with the usual greens of gram leaves or of rape, but rarely with meat or ghi. He takes plenty of buttermilk, but if he makes ghi, he sells it. Clothes are of the simplest; eight of the fourteen members of the bank we saw to-day said they had only one suit. Nor does the tenant spend much on his marriages—in the case of a man with two yoke of oxen, generally no more than Rs.100.

In the evening I visited the houses of two tenants in Kunda. One had two yoke of oxen, and the other three. This one was well off, and had 25 acres of cultivated land and about fifty more of pasture. Yet he and his whole family—five in all including an infant—lived in a single windowless room measuring about fifteen feet by ten, and kept fowls there as well. The room contained a surprising variety of possessions, including two piles of bedding and a long row of enamel plates neatly set out on a carved shelf, which ran the full length of the wall. Most of the plates were superfluous and were there for show; but not the bedding, for according to the custom of this comparatively cold country the poorest as well as the richest have to supply it to their guests. This is very different from the southern Punjab, where it is a common sight to see a man going along carrying a large quilted bundle under his arm or on his back. Neither room had the spotless cleanliness or neatness of the houses seen in Jhang and Multan, and both spoke vividly of the hugger-mugger life of the poor. Though there were many superfluous possessions, a buffalo had just been sold to buy grain. The other tenant, a great tea-drinker, lived with a son and a daughter-in-law in one room, and as it was both bedroom and kitchen, the raftered ceiling was black with soot. Tenants, it may be noted, build their own houses, but get timber from their landlord free.

Though some substantial landlords live here, the village, which is a large one, was no better than any other large village I have seen on this tour. Two owners had recently dug pits for their manure, but elsewhere it was lying about on every spare bit of ground in and about the village. There was a large mosque and plenty of mullahs, mostly Khojas,[1] but no one who could explain the Koran. The big men keep their womenfolk in pardah, and jewellery is as much worn as ever.

Military Service

One of those who came to see me was a retired military officer with a distinguished record. He said military service was as popular as ever, but when I asked him whether men enlisted from *shauq* or from *bhuk*—from love of soldiering or from hunger—he replied: 'What *shauq* can there be? It is not as in your Honour's country, where I have been: with us, men become soldiers because they have not enough to eat.'[2] 'And are they happy in the army?' 'Very, your Honour. When I joined in 1909, our pay was only nine rupees, and we had to feed ourselves: now a man gets Rs.16 and a free ration. The ration, too, is good. When the men eat together, they can eat their fill, and there will be something over.'[3]

[12 MILES]

February 11*th*. KUNDA *to* KOT FATEH KHAN

At Kunda I was in a tent, and as cold as I have been on this tour, which is saying much. Ten days ago the whole of this country was under two inches of snow, a thing not seen for over thirty years. Fortunately, last night we only had rain. The morning was fine and the distances clear. North, south, east, and west, the eye looked across undulating uplands towards hills widely spread; to the Kala Chitta range ten or fifteen miles away, and to the much more distant hills of Kohat and Hazara, the last covered with snow.

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[1] A caste of Muhammadan traders.

[2] Cf. p. 28.

[3] Cf. p. 198.

Scattered Farms

We soon entered 'the *riasset*[1] of Kot', one of the largest estates in the Punjab and the property of one of its best landlords. We stopped to see one of the credit societies he has started amongst his tenants. These particular tenants all live near the land they cultivate in scattered homesteads called 'dhok'. This was unexpected, for we are back in the land of villages. How they came to live in this way no one could say. But they greatly prefer it; for it is a simple matter to look after their crops and manure their lands, and they have not to take their cattle to and from their fields every day. Remembering the fears repeatedly expressed in the central Punjab,[2] I asked them whether they were not afraid of dacoits and thieves. 'We all have a dog,' they said, 'and when one dog barks, all the dogs of the dhok round about bark, and then we waken and run out. Also we are very poor and have no jewellery, but only a blanket to throw over arm and shoulder (*bhagli shagli*).' And added one of them: 'Since we have had the English Ráj, a man may go into the 'jangal' and no one will ask him a question.' This was perhaps a little more flattering to our rule than for the moment was justified, for two policemen, one a head constable, had just been held up by a dacoit at night. The head constable got off by saying that he was a Seyyed on his way to collect offerings from his murids, but the other was robbed—an incident which is eloquent of the respect paid to pirs. Cattle-theft, however, the haunting fear of the cultivator elsewhere, is here very rare.

Tenants' Food and Clothes

Of the thirty-five present only three were eating wheat, and nearly all were buying grain for food. Did they eat butter or ghi? 'When there is no fodder, how can the cows give milk?' was the ironic reply. A few, but not many, give a smear of ghi to their chapatis. As to clothes, seventeen had only one suit—the same proportion as yesterday. We asked the oldest man present whether things were better now or in his youth. 'It was better then, we had more cattle and more grass. Now there is helplessness (*láchári*). The land is the same, but there are more of us; our difficulties have therefore increased.' The peasant is beginning to realize the disadvantages of a rapidly increasing population, and it is time he did.

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[1] A word commonly used of an Indian State, but sometimes applied (not officially) to large estates, whose owners usually have considerable judicial powers.

[2] See p. 188.

Women and Marriages

The women do everything that a man does except ploughing. They also do the shopping that has to be done in Kot, but do not visit bazaars farther afield. Marriage does not cost much. One man with two ploughs said he had spent only Rs.40 in marrying his son. No jewellery had been given; he could not afford it. The biggest tenant present, a man with four ploughs, said he had spent Rs.200. Similarly, a funeral does not cost more than Rs.60, generally much less.

A Tenant's Homestead

After inspecting the bank I turned aside to look at a dhok. It happened to be in prosperous hands, a family of three brothers with six ploughs. There was a row of newly plastered dwellings with a well-swept bit of open ground in front, where a matron was dressing the glossy black hair of a grown-up girl. Both were sitting on the ground, and looked at us perfectly unconcerned, an agreeable contrast to usual Indian custom. Always must the civilized man rejoice in the presence of beauty and grace. In a large though windowless room, perhaps thirty feet by twenty, half a dozen beds were neatly arranged head to tail round the walls. A little farther on we came to Kot, a townlet standing like a fort on rising ground and dominated by the residence of the Sirdar, the shrine of a Mahant, and a mosque with pleasant fretted minarets.

[6 MILES]

February 12*th*. HALT

To-day the Sirdar showed me one of the thirteen arbitration societies that he has started amongst his tenants—a remarkable institution with 317 members, including 25 widows and six or seven Hindu shopkeepers. In two years 96 cases have been decided, 18 of them involving an appeal from the arbitrators to the society's committee, whose decision is final. Most of them were the trivial but absorbing disputes of near neighbours. Abuse had passed, blows been given, or part of a crop been stolen, or cattle had strayed, or a loan not been repaid. In one case a thief who had been caught cutting his neighbour's crop had his fine enhanced on appeal, because he was an habitual offender. The difficult cases were those relating to girls, betrothed but not wed, or maintained by one side and claimed by another, or even abducted—mostly the result of the way women are bandied about like cattle. In one case the cost of maintaining a young girl for several years was assessed at Rs.4 a month. For a man, they said, it would be Rs.5, because he required 26 sers of flour a month.

Wages

The labour rates are eight to nine annas a day, and for an agricultural labourer Rs.3 a month (or five to ten maunds of grain at each harvest), plus two meals a day and a suit of clothes once a year. But one who merely looked after cattle would get only Rs.2. When work is heavy, a light third meal may be given; and in some cases, when work is slack, the cash rate falls. These rates are not intended to do more than pay for the maintenance of the labourer himself. The women and older children must support themselves, and this they can do by carrying water, grinding, or looking after cattle.

Pir

Of the 95 people present, 47 said they had only one suit of clothes; but all had a pir, and also a murshid,[1] though in many cases pir and murshid were one. One of them said that the last time his pir had come he had given him the customary Rs.1/4. No one could explain why this sum should be customary. It is evidently a relic of old Hindu days, for a Hindu regards a multiple of five as auspicious and scales his gifts accordingly.[1] A pir from Jhang says that this principle is commonly observed there, even with the smallest sums, and that a pir is never offered less than five 'kasira'.[2] No one gives either mullah or pir a good character. There are only two or three good pirs in the tahsil, and it is significant that none of them does piri-mureedi. Yet, though the pir does so little for the people, in influence he rivals the landlord and surpasses the money-lender. But this influence is being rapidly undermined by education and by the sight of his greedy worldly life.

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[1] See p. 218.

Mullahs The mullah is no better spoken of than the pir. Only 1 per cent—probably a liberal estimate—can explain what they read. The rest do little but 'gabble the Koran' and are only superior village menials, with small influence and no learning. Many are weavers, and nearly all occupy their office for no other reason than that their fathers occupied it before them. A mullah is usually a kázi as well; that is, he reads the 'nakah'[3] at marriage and washes and lays out the body at death. In return he gets, in this village, one chapati a day from each of his clients and four to sixteen pounds of grain at each harvest. Elsewhere he is sometimes paid by the gift of a piece of land; but usually, like other village menials, he is given grain at harvest. And like them, he has his regular clients; and when he dies, his sons divide his clients amongst them like so much land. So also do cobbler, blacksmith, and barber, and all who have a claim upon the produce of the village. When I inquired whether with the natural increase of mullahs and barbers, &c., such subdivision did not make it impossible for them to live, I received the effective reply—'but we also increase'.

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[1] Cf. p. 246 n.

[2] Twelve kasira make one anna.

[3] The marriage contract.

An Incontinent Mullah

That these rights are valued is clear from the following case. A local mullah eloped with another man's wife, and returning eleven years later declared her to be his own lawful wife. His *locum tenens*, who had been enjoying his customary dues, was naturally not amongst those who welcomed him most heartily. At his instigation, indeed, the villagers said that they would not allow him either to pray in the village mosque or to join in their funeral rites; which meant, of course, that he could not act as their mullah. Their grounds for this were that he was living with another man's wife and had also been too intimate with her mother. He denied both charges, stating in regard to the former that the lady had been divorced by her first husband and then lawfully married to him. Both sides obtained decisions in their favour, one from the hereditary maulvi of Kot, and the other from a trained maulvi imported by the Sirdar from outside to minister to his people. And there matters would have remained, breeding faction and strife, had not the Sirdar with much difficulty—it took two days of discussion—persuaded the parties to refer the question to a panchayet consisting of the two maulvis and of a third from Shamsabad, a man widely respected. The latter had just arrived, and the Sirdar suggested that the case should be heard in my presence. At 5 o'clock all concerned came to the guest house accordingly. Dhurries were spread in the verandah for the disputants, about twenty in all, and the rest of us sat on a half circle of chairs with the maulvis in the centre.

The leading maulvi was an impressive figure, and with his shaggy brows, grey beard, dignified gestures, and rainbow-coloured dress seemed expressly formed to apply the wisdom of the past to the complexities of the present. The hereditary maulvi was also grey-bearded, but small in stature and, as the event proved, small and obstinate in mind. The trained maulvi was much younger, and at the first sight with his clear almost effeminate complexion, black beard, and russet brown coat, the least impressive of the three; but directly he opened his mouth, it was evident that he was the quickest and cleverest, of which the outward and visible sign was the alertness of his pose as he sat on his chair. The amorous mullah sat on the ground a little in front of the others, and with his black well-clipped beard, thin mouth, and keen but slightly dissipated features suggested a Renaissance Italian of not quite the best period. He argued his case well, rising occasionally to passion but controlling himself at a word from the head maulvi. His opponents consisted of ordinary peasants, who spoke without eloquence but with an earnestness which showed that it was no frivolous complaint. The head maulvi opened the case by expounding the law in short crisp sentences which rattled amongst us like hailstones. But they soon melted away in a shower of 'ifs', which left matters pretty much as they were. The other two maulvis followed on the same lines, and it soon became clear that, though all three might be agreed upon what the law would be *if* this or that were the case, they had not the least intention of agreeing upon the facts. The question was slipping into a regular bog of disputation when the Sirdar intervened and with clear practical mind explained what the issues were. The head maulvi tried to get him to express an opinion, which coming from him would almost have been a decision. 'But', said the Sirdar, 'you three are men of age and weight (*buzurg*), and it is for this reason that we have put you to the great inconvenience of coming here to-day to decide the matter. Fortunately, after an hour's talk, it occurred to the head maulvi that the original husband had not lodged any complaint against his wife living with the mullah, and since he had not done so, no one else had the right to object. It must, therefore, be held that the 'nakah' had been read and the mullah lawfully married. This settled the first issue.

They now turned to the second—whether the mullah had had illicit intercourse with the mother. If he had, according to the Shariat, the marriage would be automatically void. Little by little they slipped back to the first issue, and once more the bog yawned. The trained maulvi said that the case had been referred to a third maulvi, whose decision was '*mahkam*'—definite and final. This word had a most disturbing effect upon the head maulvi. 'Mahkam!' he repeated uneasily, 'then the case is decided and we cannot interfere.' But the Sirdar interposed again. It was not a case of 'mahkam', for though the parties had agreed to refer the question to a third maulvi, they had not agreed upon the maulvi who gave the decision. The case was therefore still undecided. The interminable discussion began again, and now turned upon a point of procedure. The trained maulvi asserted that before coming to his decision he had heard all the evidence, and it was a question whether evidence once heard could be heard again. Was he quite sure that the evidence had been properly taken, asked the head maulvi, as ever seeking a way of escape. He was quite sure; whereat the head maulvi looked doubtfully at the ground. With the help of the Sirdar, who throughout was a model of tact, deference, and sense, these two maulvis at last reached agreement on the point of procedure. But when the hereditary maulvi's concurrence was sought, hugging himself in his shawl, he said he was too ill to express an opinion. This was too much even for the Sirdar. Did he not realize, he asked in emphatic, yet still deferential tones, that fifteen or twenty persons had come here to have this matter decided, and surely they were entitled to a decision, and even if he were ill it hardly became him to think of his comfort. Then, said the maulvi testily—'I do not agree.' But after a further appeal and yet further discussion agreement was reached, and it was decided that the three maulvis should hear the evidence over again. And that was all the two hours' debate produced. *Parturiunt maulvis.*[1]

The Sirdar, of whom something must be said, is that rare thing—a good landlord. Brought up by his mother—he was only eighteen months old when his father died—and educated at the Lahore Chiefs' College and at Sandhurst, on coming of age six or seven years ago he received charge of his large estates (70,000 acres), and finding it impossible to combine their proper management with soldiering, gave up his commission and settled at Kot. He now represents the landlords of the western Punjab on the Legislative Assembly. Like a good landlord he started making advances free of interest to his tenants, but after trying this for a time came to the conclusion that the loans would be of greater advantage if made and recovered by the people themselves. Accordingly, he started a co-operative credit society in each of his twenty-six villages, and to facilitate their operations and give them cohesion, grouped them into a Union, of which he is president and which he entirely finances. Last autumn, to improve local wheat, he distributed 5,000 maunds[2] of Punjab 8 A seed to his tenants through the Union and their societies. All advances are made free of interest, and the societies recoup themselves by charging some trifle for audit and a small percentage of the amount on loan for expenses. Another duty of the good landlord is to settle his tenant's disputes. Here again the Sirdar thought that it would be better to teach his tenants to do this themselves. Thirteen arbitration societies were the result, and how good they can be we have already seen. Another experiment is the starting of a cattle farm to breed bullocks of the excellent north country Dhanni breed. He has two bulls and forty cows, and sells their offspring through the Union to his tenants at low prices, stipulating only that they shall not sell them to any one who is not on the estate. He is also trying to improve the local breed of horse and has a number of English thoroughbreds in his stud. But it is uphill work, because many landlords now are substituting motors for horses. One experiment he has not repeated. A year or two ago, to test the good faith of his tenants, instead of having his share of the produce ascertained in the customary way by weighment, he left every tenant to apportion it himself but had the produce of each field carefully appraised first. The results would have gratified a cynic. Only two brought him more than had been appraised as his share: most brought him far less, and one only two maunds instead of the expected twenty-five.

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[1] Ultimately the maulvis found in favour of the mullah; but in spite of this the villagers refuse to say their prayers after him or to make him any payment, and another village to which he applied for employment has also refused to let him act as their Imam.

[2] 184 tons.

We had talked long, and it was after eight when I realized with a shock that it was the first day of Ramzan and that the Sirdar had eaten nothing all day. Yet, such is the breeding of the East, he had not given a hint or a sign of impatience.

February 13*th*. KOT FATEH KHAN *to* FATEHJANG

An Arbitration Society and a difficult Case

The Sirdar rode with me part of the way to show me another of his arbitration societies. It was not so good as the last: in fact, it was specially shown as one of the worst. Yet it had done useful if somewhat happy-go-lucky work for its 234 members. In two years thirty-one disputes had been decided, and only one had been the subject of appeal to the committee. This one had taxed the society beyond its capacity. The facts of the case are these: *A* had married his daughter at a tender age to *B*. Five years passed, and the time came to consummate the marriage. This *B* refused to do, having in the interval married again. *A* then applied to the society for redress, and the arbitrators to whom it was referred ordered *B* either to complete the marriage or pay *A* Rs.75. Negotiations between the parties followed but without result. To-day *B* declared that he was quite prepared to marry the girl, but that *A* insisted first upon the payment of two maunds of gur and Rs.35 in cash. The question was—what should be done next? The Sirdar was anxious for a speedy decision to prevent the parties going to court. Before the arbitration society was started, disputes were often settled by the 'chit-dharia'[1] method, that is, by white-bearded elders, who used their influence to get the parties to compromise. The Sirdar thought we might try the system in this case. Each party selected a 'panch'—one of them, though a Muhammadan, chose a Hindu shopkeeper—and with the consent of both a greybeard with spectacles was chosen as the 'sarpanch' or president of the court. The case was stated. There was no doubt as to *B*'s claim to the girl, but as he already had one wife, I suggested a formal divorce, 'for how will you support two?' (he was only a tenant with two ploughs). 'The sustainer of all will provide,' was his reply, in the very voice of the fatalistic East. A little later, however, possibly mistrusting divine assistance, he offered to divorce the girl in return for Rs.200—a modest enough demand in a country in which every peasant girl has a scarcity cash value. The panchayet of three then retired to consider their decision. In less than five minutes they returned and ordered that the girl should be divorced and *B* paid Rs.70. *A* agreed at once, but *B* jibbed at receiving only Rs.70. 'What now?' said the Sirdar, turning to me. I suggested that if *B* refused to accept the decision, he should be forbidden huqqa and water, in fact be ostracized; but the Sirdar was afraid that might lead to feud, and there we left the matter. It illustrates the difficulties of summary justice when based upon goodwill and not upon fear; also the beginning of that bane of village life—faction.[2]

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[1] Literally, white beardedness.

[2] Eventually the case was settled for Rs.76 (£5 14*s*.), in return for which the husband divorced the girl: the latter then married again.

The Administration

Before leaving the village I suggested to the Sirdar that we should find out how much they knew about the administration of the country. There were about 100 present—nearly all tenants or village menials. They said they knew who lived in Campbellpur (the headquarters of the district), but everything beyond that was 'the Lat Sahib'.[1] We know the Havaldar[2] and the Thanedar,[3] the Tahsildar[4] and the Naib-Tahsildar.[5] We have also heard about the Deputy Commissioner[6] but know nothing about him.' That was as far as we could get till we picked out a greybeard who seemed better informed than the rest. He knew the Commissioner:[7] he was the 'Ráwalwala', i.e. the man who lived in Rawalpindi. Then there were four 'Councilwala' in Lahore, but this was only hearsay (*suni sunayi ki gal*). I thought this showed unexpected acquaintance with the Reforms system, until he added on being asked what they did: 'They hang some and let off others.' The four Councilwala were evidently the High Court. Proceeding, he said there was also a 'Financial Sahib'[8] and a 'Viceroy Sahib'. He did not know what the first did, but the second was the Bádshah[9] who sent people to different districts. Then there was a 'Lat Sahib', who was above the Commissioner but below the Councilwalas, for they could hang and he could not.

As we approached Fatehjang the Himalayas came into full view in a fine confused mass of lower and higher hills, the latter covered with snow.

[11 MILES]

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[1] The vernacular name for the Governor of the Province.

[2] Police sergeant.

[3] Police sub-inspector in charge of a police station.

[4] Revenue official in charge of a tahsil.

[5] The Tahsildar's deputy.

[6] Officer in charge of a district: compare *Prefet*.

[7] Executive officer in charge of a division or group of five or six districts.

[8] A reference to the two Financial Commissioners at Lahore: they are the chief revenue authority.

[9] King.

February 14*th.* FATEHJANG *to* JHANG[1]

The Kala Chitta Hills

A glorious morning. The storm clouds of yesterday had cleared, leaving behind them fleets of white clouds sailing across a sky of perfect blue. The snows stood out clear and dazzling, and stretched in a sharp unbroken line almost as far as the Pir Panjal, the range which divides the Punjab from Kashmir. The wind was from the north-west and blew with so keen an edge that it was pleasanter to walk than to ride. Our way lay across a spur of the Kala Chitta hills, 'the Black and White hills', so called from their light and dark appearance. Covered with a loose white shale and sprinkled with the wild olive and with dark-green bushes they recalled the barer regions of the Apennines, and as in Italy the olives shone silver grey in the noonday sunlight. The valleys were rich in wheat and rape, and the yellow fields of the latter were in glorious riotous contrast to the blue hills. A noble country, and Jhang is nobly placed in the midst of it, high up on a hillock commanding a superb view of the snows of Hazara. Later in the day, when the setting sun turned the yellow rape to gold and the snows to rose, once more I blessed the day on which I came to India.

Persian Wayfarers

We had not gone far from Fatehjang when we met the motleyest crowd of wayfarers I have seen upon any road—about forty men, women, and children; some on ponies, some on foot, and all the younger rushing eagerly forward and in bold laughing tones demanding baksheesh. Their appearance was so singular—one wore a long dark coat with 'ticket-collector' embroidered on the collar—and their features so unfamiliar, that I stopped and asked who and whence they were. 'Hamadan,'[2] was the brief but surprising reply, and another added, 'Macca Sharif'.[3] We thought they were romancing, but passports, produced from an aged leather wallet, showed that they had been at Jask in September 1927, and at Karachi the following month. There was also a letter from the Persian Consulate in Calcutta dated July 1928. According to their story, leaving Persia they had gone by ship to Suez, trained to Medina, visited Mecca, and then come on to India, intending to return to Persia through Afghanistan. They had come on foot through Sind and Bahawalpur—the permission of the Bahawalpur State was produced—and had just been turned back from going through Afghanistan owing to the disturbances. They were most exclamatory and not very intelligible, but we gathered that in Persia they cultivated the land, and grew wheat and grapes. Could one wish for a more varied road than the road in India to-day?

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[1] To be distinguished from the Jhang that gives its name to the district described in Ch. VIII.

[2] A town in Persia.

[3] 'Holy Mecca'.

A Khattar Bank

Later we turned off the road to see a Khattar bank. I have already mentioned the Khattars.[1] 'They are at once the most mysterious, the most interesting, and the most unsatisfactory tribe in the district.'[2] There are about 10,000 of them, and six or seven years ago their leader, who is a better landlord than most, formed a panchayet (not under the Panchayet Act) for the whole tribe, much as the Meos have done in the south, but the experiment proved a failure and has been abandoned. Said a member of the bank: 'There was stupidity and great hatred (*kadurat*) and no fellow feeling (*hamdardi*).' In other words the spirit that co-operation seeks to instil was absent: also the legal powers enjoyed by an arbitration society to enforce its decisions. The people we saw to-day were a mixed lot, the tenants excessively ignorant, and the landlords, mostly in the 100 to 200 acre class, intelligent but spiritless. Much the most alert was the Secretary. He was approaching seventy and had not been educated beyond the fourth primary; but it was said that in those days education was much better than it is to-day, and the Secretary claimed to have read the *Gulistan* and the *Bostan* in Persian, and also *Euclid*. Unfortunately he is no better than he should be in regard to money; for when I asked to see the balance (Rs.78), he stood up uneasily and began to protest that it was at his farm (*dhok*) and would take time to fetch. At this the people behind him could hardly repress their smiles. On leaving the village, we left the Sub-Inspector of Banks behind to see that the amount was produced and handed over to the treasurer. This took two hours.

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[1] p. 295.

[2] *Attock Gaz.*, 1907, p. 84: compare also, 'Most of them are on bad terms with their tenants and a few indulge in crime' (*Fatehjang A. R.*, 1926, p. 19).

Embezzlements

This is by no means the first case on this tour of laxity of this kind.[1] With about five crores (£3,750,000) passing every year in and out of our 15,000 banks, the opportunities for dishonest dealing are innumerable, and embezzlements frequently occur. It is one of the difficulties in the spread of co-operation in this country that notions of what may be done with other people's money are apt to be exceedingly elastic. Treasurers of village banks often find it convenient to keep their societies' funds with their own and to use both indifferently; and whether a society's money will be forthcoming when asked for depends largely upon whether at that moment the Treasurer is in funds or not. Last month I paid an important village bank a surprise visit and asked to see the balance, which stood in the books at over Rs.2,600 and had for months stood at a much higher figure. An hour passed before the whole amount could be scraped together. It was brought in three separate instalments, and where it came from I could only guess. Certainly very little of it came from the Treasurer's house. This was a particularly bad case, for the society had for years owed a large sum to a Banking Union, on which it was paying interest at 8 per cent. All of which is another illustration of the close connexion between character and sound finance, a point repeatedly emphasized in these pages.

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[1] See pp. 227, 248.

Almost wherever I have been on this tour, the cultivator has asserted that he has no leisure for anything but cultivating his land. As this is a tract entirely dependent upon rain, and therefore not susceptible of very intensive cultivation, I thought it might be an exception. But no: they said that owing to the scarcity they spent all the morning till midday getting fodder for their cattle. They go to the hills and lop the branches of the trees there, and in the afternoon chop them up and feed the cattle. And even if there were no scarcity, they said they would be busy ploughing, levelling, and embanking, and preparing to sow melons, onions, and tobacco. 'The person who sits on a charpoy gets into debt and becomes a badmásh.'[1] When I mentioned Mr. Gandhi's idea, they said it was good; but cotton was now very dear, and they could not afford to buy it. Also, the clothes got in the bazaar were cheaper than those made at home, and though the latter lasted twice as long, they could not afford the extra cost.

Leisure

Labour was now a difficulty, since so many sought service with the cement company at Wah (13 miles away) and the Attock Oil Company at Khaur. Even so, they did not pay their labourers more than Rs.3 a month, plus the usual two meals and suit of clothes. One present said he paid only Rs.2/8. Of the eight tenants present only one said he owned more than one suit of clothes, and he had been in the army. He fully endorsed all I was told about the army a few days ago,[2] claiming only that most enlisted from keenness rather than hunger. I asked him how he liked village fare after military rations: he admitted that here there was a little more hardship (*taklif*).

Wages, Clothes, and the Army

The diet of this village is distinctly superior to that of the other villages seen, mainly because there are fifteen or sixteen wells and vegetables can be grown. All, too, keep a few poultry; no one, however, more than eleven, for they cannot afford to feed a large

Food, Poultry, Women

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[1] Bad character.

[2] p. 298.

number. Last summer almost the whole of their stock was carried off by chicken cholera, which devastated the district—an incident which shows how difficult it is for the Indian peasant to add to his resources after the manner of the Western. All keep sheep but not more than fifteen or twenty each, since cattle are kept as well. All drink buttermilk, and many eat ghi. The milk is not heated as in the central Punjab, but a little buttermilk is poured in to make the butter set. Only the potter makes dung-cakes, requiring them for baking his pots. The owners observe pardah, but not the tenants. Their women do everything except the ploughing; and they also share in the shopping. In this, said the men, there is loss (*ghatta*), for they do not buy and sell wisely; and a voice added: 'It is the women that are stronger than their husbands who do it.' In these valleys some live in villages, and some in scattered homesteads (*dhok*). For the reasons given three days ago they were unanimous that the homestead was best. And they are certainly right.

The Administration

In conclusion we asked the tenants what they knew about their rulers. The first said he knew the patwari and the kanungo,[1] but beyond that nothing. Another could go as far as the Commissioner, but had no idea who was at Lahore. A third admitted he did not know who was king—'I do not even know his name.' 'They are four-legged beasts,' commented the Secretary. The best-informed member knew the whole official ladder, and took in a vernacular paper.

[11 MILES]

February 15th. HALT

We catechized the bank we saw to-day in the same way as before about their rulers. One man got as far as the Deputy Commissioner and the District Judge. Another taking up the tale, added: 'Above the Judge is Government, and above Government, God.' A third, when asked who lived at Lahore, replied: 'The Chief Commissioner and the Viceroy who was the Lord of Lords (*Dade te Dade*).' I asked who made the laws. There were various guesses: the Sirkar, the lawyers, the four Councilwalas, the Viceroy-i-Hind. And where does the Viceroy live? 'In Calcutta and in the Wilayet (Europe).' Forty-three were present, forty of them owners, and the Grand Trunk road is only ten miles away!

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[1] A petty revenue official.

Ploughing with Cows

A feature of the district is the custom of ploughing with cows. This may also be seen in parts of Rawalpindi and Jhelum (e.g. Gujar Khan and Chakwal). In this district it is common and is mainly due to poverty. For this reason the attempt recently made to stop it failed, as all attempts at reform must fail when an abuse is due to poverty and poverty remains. In the central Punjab the smallholder keeps bullocks for ploughing and a milch buffalo for buttermilk and ghi; but here the peasant cannot often afford the extra beast. Also, as the hills afford ample grazing, he likes to breed his own bullocks. In the central Punjab, where the grazing is much more restricted, the small man rarely attempts this and finds it cheaper to buy according to his needs. The cows are not used for draught, but even so the effect on them is bad, for ploughing often dries up their milk.

The Money-lender

A word is necessary about the money-lender. He is not very strong in the Fatehjang and Talagang tahsils. He is kept in check by the tribal system, for though Awans and Khattars quarrel freely amongst themselves, they will never help a money-lender against a fellow-clansman; and as each tribe has its own tract, other allies cannot be obtained. In the neighbouring districts of Mianwali, Rawalpindi, and Hazara, where tribes are mingled together, the money-lender is more powerful. There, as in the south-west, he carries off the grain from the threshing-floor; but here that is uncommon. Interest rates, however, are high, and for this harvest most had borrowed grain on the 50 per cent basis; a few even on the cent per cent basis;[1] but the latter were those who could not be trusted to repay.

February 16th. JHANG *to* HASAN ABDAL

The day had a cold northern look, and the sky was heavily overcast; but the keen air, the brilliant mustard yellow of the rape, and the largeness of mountain and plain around us produced an exhilarating effect, heightened almost to excitement by the thought that it was the last of over fifty marches. Before us, too, rose the hills at the foot of which Alexander's host once passed on their way to conquer the Punjab.

Somewhat reluctantly I had agreed to see one more bank, but I did not regret it. The village stood on a hillock and looked as if the brown hill-side had been carved into square blocks one above the other and then loopholed. We found twenty-five owners and tenants waiting to receive us, most of the former peasant proprietors. Compared with those we saw yesterday they were prosperous. No one, for example, used cows for ploughing; they wanted them for milk, and for breeding stock. Some even kept buffaloes. These they regarded as a necessity—'Without them we could not live: we should have no ghi, and there would be no milk for the guest.' The remark shows how relative is the idea of necessity, for in the country through which we have passed this week I have not seen a single buffalo. They exist of course—one was mentioned at Kunda[2] —but they are not common—doubtless because the country is too dry to provide the pools in which they love to wallow. Yesterday's folk were nearly all in debt to both bank and money-lender, and the bank seemed only to have opened another door for the borrowing of money. Here, when the bank was started, only one of the nineteen members was in debt. Now all have borrowed mainly for the purchase of cattle, two even for trade. Both banks show how easily a credit society may increase debt. There is no harm in this as long as it leads to increased production, but in India this is rare, and much vigilance and teaching are necessary to prevent the reverse. A small sign that the village had increased in prosperity was a remark made when we were discussing the age of marriage. 'Twenty years ago a young man did not scent himself till he was eighteen, but now he starts doing it at ten.' In most parts of the province the age of marriage is tending upwards, but here it seems to be the other way, and mere boys learn to make soft eyes.

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[1] In the one case the borrower agrees to repay at the next harvest 50 per cent more grain than he takes; and in the other, twice as much. The actual rate of interest varies with the date on which the loan is taken (whether nearer or further from the harvest) and with the ratio of prices at the beginning and end of the loan: at the end they are generally lower than at the beginning.

[2] p. 297.

Work

Learning that the coverlets on the beds brought out for us to sit on were not home-made, I mentioned Mr. Gandhi. 'His idea is good, but the march of the times (*zamána da chal*) is against him, and many zemindars have thrown it away.' 'But what do you do when the Rabi is sown?' 'Till Lori (middle of January) we lift the basket on to our heads and work on the road or we sell cattle, but since Lori we have been busy with our fields.'

Food, Houses, and Clothes

The standard of living was the highest we have yet met with in the district, no doubt because there was more water and we were approaching the Grand Trunk road. Till the chicken cholera epidemic of last summer swept them all away, all had kept from ten to twenty fowls apiece, but only for home consumption. All, too, kept some kind of milch animal, but said one—'We are wretched folk (*mesqin*): when a calf is born, we get milk and buttermilk, but when the mother goes dry, we have to beg these things from others, for we have not the means (*tákat*) to keep more.' Of the twenty-five present as many as eleven said they had only one suit of clothes. To the Punjab peasant clothes appear to be of far less importance than house and food. We had a look at the house of a tenant with only one plough. It was the usual one-room affair with a whole family living in it, and there were the familiar signs of poverty: the room was kitchen as well as bedroom, the string beds were old and sagging, and the costliest possession was a spinning-wheel. Yet everything was well arranged; the bedding was neatly folded and piled in a corner, and along one wall ran a long shelf, mud-plastered yet ornamented, to carry the owner's smaller possessions, amongst them a pottery plate. 'This plate', said a villager, 'is for beauty (*zinat*), so that when a person enters his heart may be glad. Otherwise he would be moved to anger and leave the room spitting.' 'Others', he continued, 'have pukka houses and rugs; but we zemindars have only one room, and we have what beauty we may.' At one side was a large square grain bin (*kothi*) made of well-plastered mud. Flowery patterns in relief had been made on its rough surface, and the wooden panel which closed the opening was pleasantly lacquered and painted. Through the manifest poverty shone the sense of beauty in its most rustic form, and as I left the house I felt that I would rather be poor as a church mouse with some of this feeling than as rich as Croesus with none.

A Village Pir

Noticing three flags flying above a neighbouring house, I asked the inevitable question. The house belonged to the president of the bank, a pir whose charms had been successful in procuring sons for three of his clients. The three flags were the signs of their gratitude—also, perhaps, an advertisement of his success. Some of those I meet, not many, assert that pirs are fallen from their high estate, but this was not the view here. There was no change, said the pir-president, in the faith of the people, and piri-mureedi was as fruitful as ever. Incidentally, at harvest-time he supplies every one in the village with a tawiz to keep the jinns off the grain heap.

Here, as in other villages we have visited this week, *Indigenous Co-operation*

there is plenty of indigenous co-operation. When grain has to be threshed or a field levelled, neighbours gather together and work for each other in return for one square meal a day. The same is done when a house has to be built or re-roofed, for one person cannot carry the beams by himself or cover them with earth. This is the same as the 'ábat' system of the central Punjab, but here it is called 'mangáli'. When, too, a grave has to be dug, help is forthcoming, for in this hard stony soil this is more than one man can manage. Even the roads are repaired in common, and this is said to be the custom throughout the tract (but not the district). Sometimes men who wish to do a service to God (*Khudaparasti*) go out by themselves and of their own accord repair a damaged bit. Two such were present, and it was said that every village round had some one like them. In one village there is a Maliar who spends most of his time in this way. Fifteen years ago, when he was just fifty, he lost both wife and children, who were carried off by plague. He gave up his land and dedicated himself to the service of God, and this was the form his service took. His village is 15 miles from Hasan Abdal, and most days he may be seen working on the road between them; but he also repairs the roads and paths leading to other villages in the neighbourhood. At night he finds shelter in the village mosque and for food is content with the 'bits of bread' given him by the charitable. The case recalled the woman of Teyma described by Doughty, who, having lost all her four sons, ministered to the wants of others 'in the hope that my Lord at the last will have mercy upon me'.[1]

We rode on a mile or two, and rising from the plain I saw a long streamer of white dust. It came from a passing car, a sign that we were approaching the Grand Trunk road, which here runs from Rawalpindi to Peshawar. A little later we saw the road before us, hard, white, straight, and shining, a complete contrast to the pleasant soft brown kachha road upon which we were riding. And in the contrast seemed to lie much of the difference between east and west. For the moment, mounted upon a horse and glowing with the adventure of our 700 miles, I could not doubt which I preferred. Crossing the Harro, we were soon jogging through the fat well-watered lands of Hasan Abdal. Above us rose the hill which was once the scene of strife between a churlish fakir and the saintly Baba Nanak. Both are still honoured, the saint with puja done by a tank full of fish and pellucid water, and the fakir by the burning of a nightly lamp for which, according to curious but time-honoured custom, the local Sub-Inspector of Police always pays—lest, it is said, he should be transferred prematurely from what was once a popular circle.

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[1] *Op. cit.* i. 521.

With a feeling that I should not have thought possible eleven weeks ago I gave my hireling mare her last mouthful of gur and entrained for Lahore.

[13 MILES]

EPILOGUE

March 16th. ANACAPRI

This morning, walking down to the Blue Grotto, I met a peasant coming up the hill carrying a gun. He was comfortably dressed in a knickerbocker suit and had small dark eyes and a healthy russet complexion. A question about the way led to talk. He had been shooting thrushes for the family dinner. Yes, that was his dog (no pie dogs here) and here was his garden gate. Would I not go in? We entered and he told me about his life in the pleasant unselfconscious manner of the Italian peasant. After the war, like so many other Italians, he went off to seek his fortune in America. After eight years 'in commerce' in Buenos Ayres he returned to Capri the richer by £2,000. Part of this he invested in the purchase of half a hectare (1¼) acres of not very good land: the rest he deposited in a bank, which pays him £50 a year as interest. With the help of this, he is able to support a wife and four children, the eldest aged ten. Without it he would require a whole hectare or 2½ acres. The vine and the olive are what give the land value, and the fact that it is intensively cultivated and that no corner of it is wasted is what makes it highly productive. Wheat is grown between the interlacing vines, and vegetables and potatoes between the olive trees. 'One must grow a little of everything,' he remarked with the instinctive caution of the peasant. He sold most of his wine and oil—these were his two commercial crops—but everything else he grew primarily for subsistence, selling only what he and his family could not consume. Not much is bought: for the most part coffee, sugar, and clothes, and occasionally meat. The last they eat on Thursdays and Sundays. To ensure a variety of diet at small expense, he keeps about fifty hens, a fine pig weighing 360 pounds, a goat for milk, a number of rabbits, and a pair of pigeons, all simply but adequately housed. 'The pigeons', he said with a smile of satisfaction, 'have a pair of young ones every 29 days.' The droppings of this very varied live stock are a valuable addition to the land, and all that has to be spent upon manure is a little over £2 a year. No bullock or cow is kept: the property is too small, and the spade is used instead of the plough. His wife helps in the field-work and takes a hand in everything he does, even in digging with the spade. If she did not help in this way, he would have to employ a hand, and that they could not afford. They got up at 5.30 and went to bed at 9.30. I asked about marriage. Girls married at 18 or 20, but young men waited till they were 25 or 26. A wedding cost from £80 to £100. This included what both sides spent and both jewellery and trousseau. Not more than £15 or £16 would ordinarily be spent upon jewellery. If at any time money had to be borrowed, it could be had at from 6 to 11 per cent. The latter was the maximum rate. He himself borrowed at 4½ to 5 per cent; but that was because he could pledge his deposit as security.

He had a contented look; and with reason, for he had enough to live on, plenty of work, a nice simply furnished house with his land all round it (not scattered in a half a dozen different plots), a modest amount of capital available for an emergency, and some education and experience from having been abroad. And not far below sparkled the most beautiful sea in the world.

PART III: DEDUCTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

XII. THE MONEY-LENDER, LANDLORD, AND PIR—THE OLD LIGHT AND THE NEW

The Money-lender

The Sahukar and his Rivals

'I must begin with a great body of facts,' says Darwin, 'and not from a principle (in which I always suspect some fallacy), and then as much deduction as you please.' We have now collected our facts, and the time has come for deductions and general impressions. In some cases the facts are sufficient to warrant the former, in others—the more numerous—only the latter. I start with the money-lender, the person commonly known as the sahukar, for after the peasant he is the most important factor in village life. Almost everywhere we have found his power on the decline, and even where his financial hold is unshaken, his psychological influence is weakening. Once the spoilt child of Government, he has become its step-child, and now when he seeks to encroach upon the peasant's land and his belongings, he finds himself confronted with a cactus hedge of legal rights and privileges, most of which have been conferred upon the peasant during the last thirty years to protect him against attachment and eviction.[1] Since the war the peasant has become much more alive to the value of these rights, and he is also fast learning the advantages of combination. In the province there are now close on 20,000 co-operative societies, of which nearly 16,000 are village banks. The members of these banks number over 450,000, and as most are heads of families, it may be said that out of the 15 millions supported by agriculture about 2 millions benefit from the village bank. Co-operation has therefore become a formidable rival to the sahukar. And he has another who threatens to be equally formidable—the agriculturist money-lender. I have dealt with him at length elsewhere,[1] and all that it is necessary to add here is that there are many indications that he is steadily advancing, especially in the central Punjab and the canal colonies where the Sikh Jat, the arch-representative of the type, predominates. In the Lyallpur tahsil alone there are probably 1,000,[2] and twenty times this number in the province.[3] The combined influence of these three factors—the legal protection accorded to the cultivator, the spread of co-operation, and the growth of the agriculturist money-lender—has led many sahukars to migrate from the village to the town. This is particularly marked in Lyallpur, and we came across it also in Hoshiarpur.[4] In the colonies the sahukar is feeling the pressure so keenly that he has formed an organization to protect his interests.[5] And almost everywhere, to meet a money-lender is to be certain of hearing a loud complaint of the difficulties of the business. In short, the sahukar's short-lived supremacy of fifty years is past, and his power, though not generally broken, is severely shaken.[6]

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[1] For the nature of these rights see the author's *op. cit.*, p. 247.

If the power of the professional money-lender is on the decline, the extent of the decline varies greatly from tract to tract. In districts like Hoshiarpur and Jullundur, where the peasant is wide awake, money abundant, and co-operation firmly established—in each district there are over 1,000 societies—his power is definitely broken. But where, as along the foot-hills of the Himalayas, communications are bad and markets distant, and where, as in Gurgaon and Muzaffargarh, the people are desperately poor and entirely feckless, his power is almost intact, and he still carries off whatever he can straight from the threshing-floor and harasses the peasant with his petty exactions of fuel, fodder, and ghi. Even where his power is broken, it is a question whether he can be completely ousted from the village, as has been done in Austria and Germany.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 226. [2] p. 206. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[4] p. 33. [5] p. 233.

[6] Cf. the following from the *Report on Unemployment in the Punjab*, 1928 (p. 5): 'In some districts there is considerable distress among the classes who formerly subsisted by money-lending and petty shop-keeping, but whose activities have been somewhat curtailed by the march of events in recent years.'

Much depends on whether the ordinary village bank can secure the entire custom of its members. So far comparatively few have succeeded in doing this, and many members—perhaps 30 to 40 per cent—deal with both money-lender and village bank. One reason for this is the almost universal custom of borrowing money for a marriage. No village bank, with any regard for its safety or the benefit of its members, can consider advancing the large sums commonly required for this purpose. But the money-lender, more expert at recovery and with only his own interest to think of, will often advance them. And, for reasons that have been explained,[1] he is prepared to take a bigger risk than a society, and his door consequently remains open long after the bank's door is closed. To this door flock the feckless and the improvident, and as long as these abound, so long must the money-lender thrive.

Mortgage Banks

Even if the wasteful expenditure on marriages were discontinued and the feckless and improvident turned into thrifty men of business, the village bank would not be sufficient of itself to oust the money-lender, for it deals only in short-term loans repayable at latest in three years, and long-term loans will more and more be needed to sink wells, build houses, buy land, and repay old debt. For such the cultivator must generally go to the money-lender and be prepared, if necessary, to mortgage his land. Till comparatively recently the mortgage business of the province was in the hands of the sahukar; but since the Land Alienation Act (1901) made it virtually impossible for him to acquire land from a peasant, it has been steadily passing into the hands of the agriculturist money-lender, who is not restricted in this way. If therefore the mortgage bank is needed as a weapon against the sahukar, in time it will be doubly needed against the agriculturist money-lender. Without its protection there is a danger that, despite the Land Alienation Act, the expropriation of the peasant may begin again on a large scale. There are already indications of the possibility in the western Punjab, where the large landlord is taking advantage of the Act to add to his acres at the expense of the peasantry.

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[1] p. 112.

But if mortgage banks are needed, it is no easy matter to ensure their doing good rather than harm. Some think that money has only to be poured into the peasant's lap for him to shake off his burden of debt and prosper. Others, more practical but looking only to immediate advantage, think any loan justified, however large, if there is enough *material* security to cover it. The loan, they say, is needed; it is also safe: it should therefore be given. The question whether it will do good or harm is not considered. Were we dealing with a cultivator as prudent and thrifty as the French peasant, there would be no occasion to consider it. But the Indian peasant is rarely either prudent or thrifty. In his case, therefore, the question is a vital one. The mortgage bank at Naraingarh shows how easy it is for a bank with the best intentions in the world to make injudicious loans,[1] and more than once we saw into what a bog of debt and difficulty the peasant may be led by the power to borrow freely.[2] The 116 defaulters in the mortgage bank at Jhang are a further warning of the danger of extending mortgage banks too rapidly and of making money available, where there is not enough intelligence to apply it wisely or sufficient character to repay it punctually.

Character and Finance

The intimate connexion between character and sound finance can hardly be emphasized too much. Recently I came upon a mortgage bank in an upland valley in

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[1] p. 82.

[2] pp. 223, 248.

Austria which was financing long-term loans—made sometimes for twenty-five years—with ten lakhs of deposits, mostly taken for a month or two. On my expressing surprise, I was informed that the bank had been doing this for forty-two years and that there was little risk, because the peasants, with whom it mainly dealt, were so frugal, hard working, and reliable that loans were seldom in danger and foreclosure was rare; and as there was a constant flow of deposits, depositors' calls could always be met. The case illustrates forcibly the possibilities of credit when men work hard, spend wisely, and are personally trustworthy—in a word, when there is character. The very word 'credit' implies character, and where it does not exist, it is as demoralizing to borrow as it is dangerous to lend. This is the difficulty in depressed districts like Muzaffargarh and Gurgaon. On the one hand, the peasant cannot shake off the yoke of the money-lender without money; on the other, he cannot be trusted voluntarily to repay the smallest sums. Even small sums, therefore, can only be advanced when close supervision is possible. It is safe to say that had the Punjab peasant everywhere the character and intelligence of the peasant in Jullundur, he could be advanced twice as much as can safely be given at present. The money is there, or could probably be found, but character and intelligence in sufficient degree are lacking. The ordinary peasant has still to learn to distinguish between productive and unproductive expenditure, to borrow only for the former and save for the latter, and whenever he borrows always to apply the loan to the purpose for which it was given. He has also to learn to be punctual in repayment instead of for ever postponing it; to reduce his expenditure or increase his effort rather than default; by intelligence and thrift, to make both ends meet where they did not meet before, and in good years to put something by for the bad—in short, to provide for an obligation before it arises instead of trying to evade it after it has arisen.

To build up the character of the peasant and develop his intelligence is therefore indispensable to the cure of his financial ills, and once this is done money will flow freely enough into the village. This is being attempted by our 16,000 village banks, and where they succeed, men clear themselves of debt, learn to save as well as spend, and obtain as much money as they need. The Mehtons, whom we came across in Hoshiarpur,[1] are a good example of this: they work so hard and live so frugally that the money-lender has no power over them, and they now require the village bank less to advance them loans than to receive their deposits. The Ludhiana Sikhs of Lyallpur show that financial independence may even be achieved without the help of the village bank,[2] but that is exceptional. If the qualities possessed by these men were common, mortgage banks, which now number only twelve, could be started everywhere, and the rural money-lender would rapidly disappear.

Rates of Interest

On one point the rural money-lender is, perhaps, unjustly criticized—namely, his rates of interest. For the peasant proprietor they run from 12 to 24 per cent, the common rate being 18¾ per cent (*paisa rupiya*). For the tenant, and for the proprietor in areas where he is depressed or defenceless, they run up to 37½ per cent.[3] Interest rates ordinarily vary with the supply of money, the demand for it, the risk incurred in lending it, and the trouble and expense of collecting it. With the first three we are all familiar enough, but few but the money-lender thinks of the last. Yet it is almost as important as any. The trouble and cost of recovering Rs.100 from an improvident cultivator may well be greater than that of recovering a lakh from a merchant of standing; and since trouble and risk go hand in hand, it follows that where recovery is troublesome, interest rates tend to be high. In 1926 the Government of the

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[1] p. 30.

[2] p. 198.

[3] In the United Provinces, where the tenant predominates, the usual rates vary from 24 to 37½ per cent (*Co-operative Societies Report*, 1928, p. 12).

Dutch East Indies, which does an enormous money-lending business of various kinds, advanced 19 crores of rupees (about £14,000,000)[1] in loans averaging only three rupees each on the security of 50 million articles pawned by the borrowers. The interest charged varied from 12 to 72 per cent per annum, and though the average rate was 44, the net profit earned on the year's business was only 24 per cent. This means that expenses amounted to 20 per cent and that if only this amount had been charged, there would have been no profit at all. And, since every loan was fully secured, it means further that this 20 per cent represents the cost rather than the risk of operating the business. More closely analogous perhaps to rural conditions in India are the 6,000 semi-co-operative village banks of Java. Though their loans are larger than those of the pawn-broking business, their rates are even higher and vary from 30 to 80 per cent.[2] Even in the United States, where nearly every State has a fixed maximum rate of interest of not more than 12 per cent, it has been found necessary to pass the Uniform Small Loan Law which allows as much as 42 per cent per annum (3½ per cent per mensem) to be charged on loans of a certain type and size. The rate is justified on the ground that the risk in making them is great, that they are of long duration, that operating expenses are high, and that the security offered is not usually of a kind that is acceptable to a commercial bank.[3] An American writer goes so far as to say that 'if the necessitous borrower is to have credit at a lower rate than 3½ per cent per mensem, he must work out his own salvation . . . through credit union organization';[4] that is, through co-operative credit. The English Money-lenders Act of 1927 indirectly endorses this view, for it allows a maximum of 48 per cent. Viewed in this way, the rates prevailing in the Punjab are not excessive, so far as they are honourably applied. The reservation is of importance, for the money-lender is commonly charged with fraudulent or extortionate practices. It is difficult to say how far the charge is justified. Where the peasant is more than usually helpless and feckless, there appears to be truth in it—we had a hint of this in Jhang;[1] but where, as in the colonies, he is able to look after his own interests and is not deeply involved, it is probably groundless.

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[1] 170 million guilders: a guilder is worth Re.1-2.

[2] Information received from an official of the Dutch East Indies.

[3] R. F. Bergengren, *Credit Co-operation as adapted to the needs of the Worker*, 1927, pp. 10–11.

[4] Address delivered by W. S. Hilborn.

Rural and Urban Rates contrasted

Elsewhere I have estimated that the peasant proprietor pays an average of 15 per cent on his debt,[2] and it is significant that this is the commonest rate applied in income-tax cases when for want of proper accounts the village money-lender's net income has to be estimated by the application of a flat rate to his capital on loan. The rate necessarily varies from area to area, but almost nowhere is it lower than 12 or higher than 18 per cent. This does not mean, of course, that 18 per cent is the highest rate of interest commonly charged, but only that it is the maximum that can fairly be taken as the *net* profit made by an average money-lender in a given area. The corresponding rates for urban money-lending are 6 to 12 per cent, the usual rate applied being 9 or 10.[3] Broadly, therefore, it may be said that in rural areas rates of interest are twice as high as in urban. The difference between the two is a rough measure of the difference in trouble and risk between the two classes of business; and also of the difference of character between peasant and trader. Where the peasant or farmer is as business-like and reliable as the trader, he pays no more than the latter, or only so much more as is necessary to cover the extra trouble and cost of dealing with scattered clients. In the western Punjab, we saw that the Hindu farmer can borrow at much lower rates than the Muhammadan, who is less business-like and reliable;[1] and in the Una tahsil, we found that where soldiering had raised the standard of character and intelligence, the common rate was only 12 per cent, while in the south of the tahsil, where few enlist, it was two or three times as high.[2] The peasant complains bitterly of what he has to pay for his money. In the past he had reason, for his ignorance and necessity were often ruthlessly exploited. But the spread of education is gradually remedying the one, as the growth of co-operation has already materially relieved the other. And the advent of the lorry—4,500 are plying in the province [3]—is rapidly breaking down the isolation of the village and making it easy for the peasant to take his custom from the money-lender who exploits him to the one who will treat him fairly. What, however, remains unchanged is the peasant's character. From any modern standpoint it has to be admitted that he is a bad dealer. And wherever bad dealing prevails, interest rates are high.

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[1] p. 230.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 216.

[3] See the author's note on the present position of the money-lenders, Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.* viii.

The Landlord

His Justification

I come now to the landlord. Though less characteristic of the Punjab than of provinces like the United Provinces and Bengal,[4] he is a factor to be reckoned with, and in the west of the province with money-lender and pir forms a trinity which dominates the countryside. In this area, agricultural and political insecurity were once so great that without his assistance the peasant could not hope to hold his own against the ravages of nature and the attacks of turbulent neighbours: the rainfall was too capricious, and the Indus and the Frontier too unruly. Whatever his origin, he justified his existence by the protection given to his tenants; and to this day the popular notion of a good landlord is one who protects them from all aggression and helps them in all difficulties whether right or wrong. In return they are prepared to give him whatever rent or service may be sanctioned by custom. The relationship is a personal one and is as 'entirely independent of any conception of contract' [1] as of any obligation to develop the land. The latter is a western idea only recently imported and as yet barely understood. So too is the idea that a landlord should assist his tenants only by legitimate means and when their cause is just. Judged by these standards there are few good landlords in the province; and even judged by more conventional standards their number is not great. There are, of course, numerous exceptions—several are mentioned in these pages—but taking the province as a whole it may be said that the landlord is an even greater burden upon society than the money-lender. The money-lender is doubtless an evil, but till he can be replaced, he is a necessary evil. On the other hand, the landlord is too often a parasite, living on his tenants, wasting his substance, and corrupting his neighbourhood.

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[1] p. 233; cf. also p. 287.

[2] p. 24.

[3] Information kindly supplied by the Inspector General of Police.

[4] Broadly speaking, the landlord system prevails in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces (*India in 1925–26*, p. 152).

This type of man is common in Muzaffargarh. There he is on a level with the worst landlords of the *ancien régime* in France. Of those in one tahsil the late Settlement Officer wrote: 'They neither develop their lands themselves nor permit others to develop them, and their only conception of patriotism is an occasional outburst of religious intolerance.' These men have forgotten the saying in the Koran: 'And He it is who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others by (various) grades, that He might try you by what He has given you.' [2] The adjoining districts of Mianwali, Jhang, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan are a little more advanced, particularly Multan; but everywhere in the western Punjab it is uncommon to hear a landlord well spoken of, and rare to find a Muhammadan landlord developing his land. The only landlords who are doing this in any number are the Hindu Aroras. As a class they have capital, enterprise, and energy, and, as we saw at Shujabad,[1] by applying all three to the land they have produced results unsurpassed in any other part of the province. The Muhammadan landlord is generally (not always) too lazy and too indebted to attempt any development, and even when not in debt prefers to buy more land rather than improve the land he has. If elsewhere in the province the shortcomings of the landlord are less conspicuous, it is mainly because he is much less prominent. 'We find the large landowners are about the most difficult men to move,' said the Director of Agriculture before the Linlithgow Commission.[2] 'Owners of large areas,' said another witness, 'when they get rich, go to live in towns, enter into some other profession, and lose touch with real agriculture.'[3] In the colonies there are good keen men, but with some remarkable exceptions they are mostly medium holders who have come under the influence of the agricultural and co-operative departments. The bigger landowners are as often as not absentee, and what this means we saw in passing through Lyallpur.[4]

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[1] Henry Cotton, *New India*, 1907, p. 72.

[2] Pt. VIII, ch. vi, 166 (tr. Muhammad Ali).

His obligations

At a time when all ancient institutions are being subjected to searching and critical scrutiny, it is difficult to find sufficient justification for the landlord who neither helps his tenants nor develops his land. Political insecurity no longer obtains, and economic insecurity has been greatly mitigated by the spread of the canal and the growth of co-operation. What then should a landlord do to justify his existence? First and foremost he must free himself from debt, for an indebted landlord can no more help an indebted tenant than the blind can lead the blind. Having done this he should give his tenants all the assistance they need consistent with modern ideas. He should save them from going to the money-lender by financing them at reasonable rates, and from going to the courts by settling their disputes. He should give them security of tenure and give up the practice, how common,[1] of not letting them stay more than a few years on the same well. He should see to it, too, that his employees get a living wage, or sooner or later he will find himself attacked by labourer as well as by tenant. In Lyallpur agricultural wages are high enough and are not much below those paid in some parts of Europe; but in the western Punjab, where sometimes they fall as low as Rs.7 (10*s.* 6*d.*) a month, they are more to be justified by the custom of the past than by the humanity of the present.[2] If a landlord is wise and wishes to go further, he can start co-operative societies on the lines of those at Kot,[3] and if there is a mortgage bank in his neighbourhood, he can take a hand in its management. One of the difficulties in forming a bank of this kind is to find men sufficiently capable, independent, and public-spirited to act as directors. An educated landlord who has learnt to manage his affairs and who is not in debt should be the very man for the purpose.

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[1] p. 265. [2] *Op. cit.*, viii. 286. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 795. [4] p. 205.

So much for his duty towards dependants and neighbours. There is also his duty to the land. Part at least of this he should farm himself. This will encourage him to live on his estate, give him a healthy occupation, and link him with his tenants by a natural bond. Yet many are content to live on their rents, a burden to themselves and a warning to their neighbours, and few farm as much as they might. In this respect the Indian landlord might well imitate the German Junker. Before the war the latter often farmed as much as 2,000 acres, and it was upon his fields that 'the fight for scientific agriculture' in Germany was won.[1] In the Punjab, outside the colonies, the fight has hardly even begun. In every country agricultural development depends upon unceasing experiment, and one of the most useful services a landlord can render his neighbours is to make experiments. The smallholder cannot afford the risk of failure: his margin of subsistence is too slender. But he is quite shrewd enough to apply the successful experiments of others. That is why the best German authorities advocate a judicious mixture of large and small proprietors.[2] But the mixture will only be fruitful if the large play their part.

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[1] See pp. 260, 264, 292; cf. also *Punjab Village Surveys*, No. 1, pp. 60 and 141.

[2] See pp. 261, 277, 282. In Austria this summer (1929) I found that in the hills of the Salzkammergut and the country south of it an average wage was Rs.16 (40 schellings) a month plus board and lodging and, sometimes, two pairs of shoes a year.

[3] See p. 306.

The Landlord in Europe

If inquiry suggests a critical attitude towards the Punjab landlord, it must be added in his favour that there is no reason to suppose that he is more of a parasite than the landlord in other parts of India. There are few countries, indeed, where before the war the normal landlord showed any sense of responsibility for either tenants or land. The post-war landlord is different. He realizes that if he does not mend his ways he will be ended. This has already occurred in Russia, and to a large extent in Roumania. In Roumania he has been 'deprived of nearly 12 million acres in return for an almost nominal compensation'.[3] In Czechoslovakia he has also lost much of his land and has been only partially compensated. In Italy, Sicily, and Ireland he has been the object of violent agitation, and in France he is slowly losing his hold upon the land.[4] In India the significance of these facts is not generally understood, and few appreciate the possibilities of the psychological changes going on around them. The past has been so kind to the landlord that he cannot believe that the future may be harsh. Fortunately in the Punjab there are signs of a wiser disposition. Here and there tube wells are being sunk, fruit trees planted, good stock reared, and old methods of cultivation improved. More interest is taken in farming, and more attention paid to tenants—especially when they are scarce. Education is less scorned, and public obligations more considered. If this attitude becomes general—at present it is confined to the few—the landlord will survive. Otherwise, sooner or later, he may be swept away into the limbo of unregretted anachronisms.

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[1] J. H. Clapham, *The Economic Development of France and Germany, 1815–1914*, pp. 200 and 215.

[2] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 294.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[4] P. Caziot, *La Valeur d'après-guerre de la Terre*, 1920, p. 13.

Pir, Mullah, and Priest

What the landlord is in the material sphere, the pir is in the spiritual. The landlord has tenants, the pir mureeds. The landlord lives on his rents, the pir on his offerings. Both are expected to protect and assist their dependants whether right or wrong.[1] The good landlord promotes their welfare in this world, the good pir—there are a few such—tries to ensure their salvation in the next. Both are at their strongest in the western Punjab, the landlord for reasons that have already been given, the pir because 90 per cent of the population is Muhammadan and the tract is more medieval than modern. Both are treated with the utmost deference, and in both cases the deference is more a tribute to position than to worth. But if there is something to be said for the landlord, there is almost nothing to be said for the ordinary pir. He is even more of a parasite, and exploits the peasant's ignorance of the next world as systematically as any money-lender his ignorance of this. Yet such is his power that a peasant we met in Multan remarked: 'Without a pir a man is nothing.'[2] The pir who does piri-mureedi trades on this to the utmost, with the result that thousands, mostly claiming descent from the Prophet, ride about the country scattering spells and collecting offerings. These spells are nothing but scraps of paper inscribed with a text, but so potent is faith that by their virtue fears are allayed and hopes aroused, and sometimes even nervous disorders cured. Quacks are often equally successful. These men, indeed, are spiritual quacks, who forget that many of the early pirs, from whom they claim descent and derive authority, were true physicians—healers of the soul and quickeners of the spirit. Like the Hebrew prophets who were the pirs of their day,[1] they were men 'who had understanding in the vision of God',[2] and they sought to communicate their vision to others. Such were the more famous of the pirs who in pre-Mughal days came to India from central Asia; 'and it is to their persuasion and reputation rather than to the sword of any conqueror that the people of the south-western Punjab owe their faith in Islam.'[3] To-day, too, the good pirs are more concerned with 'the vision of God' than with the practice of piri-mureedi, which they rightly disdain; and if some new pirs owe their rise to their supposed miraculous powers, most owe it to the sanctity of their lives. If this sanctity were general, the pir would need no justification, and his position would be stronger. As he passes from village to village, feasted by his followers and enriched by their offerings, he must think it strong enough. But if he stops to reflect, he will see that a house built upon the sands of superstition and ignorance cannot long withstand the rising tide of modern forces: already in Lyallpur his influence is waning.[4] And as he reflects, if he is educated, he will be filled with misgiving. 'We feel ashamed,' said the B.A. son of a pir in the central Punjab in telling me that his father had made Rs.300 in twenty days; 'it is against the new light.' It is even worse, for piri-mureedi is against both the old light and the new.

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[1] Cf. p. 245.

[2] p. 254.

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[1] Those who came before the great prophets were 'men of God . . . authors of the written and witnesses of the living Word and forerunners and founders of spiritual religion and the new humanity' (Westphal and Du Pontet, *The Law and the Prophets*, 1910, p. 241). Cf. also: 'Among the Hebrews the man of God . . . gains influence by the miracles, the wonderful things which he does' (G. Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, 1902, p. 177).

[2] 2 Chronicles xxvi. 5.

[3] e.g. Sh. Bahawal Haqq, 'who after traversing nearly the whole Muhammadan world chose Multan as his place of residence', Pir Shams Tabriz, who came from Sabzwar, and Sakki Sarwar (see p. 288), whose family came from Bokhara (*Multan Gaz.*, p. 33).

[4] p. 204.

Mullahs and Priests

Yet for the good pir there is as much scope as for the good landlord. Men cannot live by bread alone, and whether they look to the old light or the new, they need ethical teaching and spiritual guidance. The peasant in Europe has always had both, to the great advantage of his character. The Punjab peasant is provided with little of either. There are mullahs and priests innumerable, but amongst those in the village few are educated and many are virtually illiterate. 'They take the name of God in order that they may fill their bellies with bread,' said a landowner of the mullahs.[1] 'They tinkle the bell and blow the conch,' said a peasant of the priests. The mullah learns to repeat the Koran in the Arabic but rarely to understand what he reads, and this fruitless learning is all he imparts to the boys of the village. The priest is well versed in temple rites and in the elaborate ceremonial of a Hindu's life; and if a prohit or family priest, he can cast a horoscope and distinguish between auspicious and inauspicious occasions. But though he can read, this is of little value to his flock, for the Hindu scriptures are written in Sanskrit, which he cannot usually interpret. The Sikh fares a little better, since the Granth Sahib is written in Punjabi; but even so, much of it is as difficult for the peasant to follow as Chaucer would be for an English rustic. The girls fare worst of all: here and there some amongst them are taught like the boys, but in general they get no teaching at all.

Religious Teaching

As a body, then, the ministrants of religion—and it is of them and not of religion that I am speaking—are not equal to their task. There are honourable exceptions—some we met, of others we heard—but, as with landlords, they are too few to do more than point the contrast between what is and what might be. At the same time, the feeling for religion is as strong as ever: again and again we came across mosque or temple being built by a common sacrifice of labour and money, and large numbers of Muhammadans still spend an hour or two a day in prayer, and fast in Ramzan. But the people as a whole are like sheep without a shepherd. Hireling shepherds there are who, in the name of religion and in the guise of education, would set one community against another and put a stop to the kindly offices and courtesies that for many years have bound Hindu and Muhammadan together in their common village life.[1] But of real shepherds, men fitted to guide and protect, there are few.

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[1] p. 45.

Yet never was guidance more sorely needed. The isolation of the village is fast disappearing; the explosive modern world is at its gates; the old walls of custom, plastered with the accretions of centuries, are crumbling; new horizons are opening, and a new dawn breaking. To many the new light is in conflict with the old, and both are in danger of being extinguished by the strong winds of individualism and materialism, which are sometimes confused with liberty and progress. Even for the educated the times are not easy: for the uneducated they are bewildering. What then is the remedy? That I must leave to the consideration of those concerned, for the question is too intimate and delicate for one not of the country to handle. I have only ventured to point out the evil, because no one I met on my tour denied its existence, and what I have seen of peasant life in different parts of Europe suggests the great importance to a village of having in its midst an educated man devoted to its service and holding steadily before it some image, however faint, of the good, the beautiful, and the true. Readers of *England's Green and Pleasant Land* will remember the desolate condition of a village entirely devoid of this illumination; and those who have read St. Reymont's novel, *The Peasants*, will recall that when the Polish village which is the scene of the book was swayed by one of its periodic outbursts of passion, it was only held together by the Church and the parish priest. In Europe the parish priest, with all his limitations, has been one of the main civilizing influences in village life. Cannot mullah and priest be made to play the same part in India? Or can they not at least be made good of their kind?

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[1] See pp. 22, 42, 62, 284.

The Old Light and the New

The Old Light In this two things are at stake—the old light and the new. The old light has been so obscured by the perversions of faith and custom that many can no longer discern it. When, for instance, the hero of Tagore's novel, *Gora*, became acquainted with village life in Bengal, 'he could see nowhere any trace of that religion which through service, love, compassion, self-respect, and respect for humanity as a whole, gives power, happiness, and life to all'.[1] Yet the light is there and it shines, however dimly, through all the ignorance and dirt and poverty of the people. We caught a glimpse of it in the devotion of the roadmender near Hasan Abdal; in the service of the headman-hakim who tended his patients without charge; in the 'God forbid' of the farmer when asked whether he took rent from those he housed in his settlement; in the feeling which made a family of Lyallpur Sikhs build a house for a blind Sadhu and sink a well for wayfarers; in the serais built for travellers by merchants in Una and Gurgaon; in the gatherings of villagers to help a neighbour to sink a well or clear land for a garden; and in the common building of more than one temple and mosque. The source from which this light springs is the villager's twofold dependence upon nature and his neighbour. From his dependence upon nature have come a penetrating awe of the unseen and the inner conviction that material wealth has little ultimate value. And from his dependence upon his neighbour has arisen the village community, which for centuries has nurtured in its members a keen sense of the inter-dependence of man and man. Wherever we have been, we have found that, despite the disintegrating forces of the age, this feeling persists and expresses itself in various forms of co-operation, which are as valuable as the more organized forms, because they are indigenous and of the very fabric of village life.[1] The weakness of the old light is due to the fact that man's dependence upon nature has been riveted by superstition, and his dependence upon the village community by custom. There is nothing to be said for superstition. For custom it may be claimed that it is an essential element in every stable society, and that as between man and man it makes for order and contentment. But in India, allied to superstition and consecrated by religion, it has become so autocratic and exacts such blind obedience that it paralyses growth and perpetuates many practices once perhaps natural but now completely irrational. So it comes that thousands of women are condemned to a life of rigid confinement, millions are regarded as untouchable, and hordes of useless cattle and able-bodied beggars are maintained at the expense of one of the poorest peoples in the world—to name only a few of the disabilities that we have come across on our tour. And such is its force that not infrequently Muhammadans living amongst Hindus observe untouchability, and Hindus living amongst Muhammadans observe pardah. Small wonder then that to most the old light is barely discernible.

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[1] *Gora*, p. 368.

The New Light

The new light is clearer and shines from a very different quarter. For man's dependence upon nature it substitutes the conquest of nature by science, and to his dependence upon custom and the village community it opposes the claims of reason and liberty. It preaches self-help rather than mutual help, independence rather than inter-dependence, individualism rather than communism—I use this word in no political sense. The darkness of fear and superstition that surrounds the old light it would dispel by education and knowledge, and the fatalism that comes from dependence upon nature by faith in man's will. Believing, too, that the mental and spiritual well-being of most is inextricably interlinked with their material welfare, that, for example, the destruction of the poor is their poverty, it does not set its face against wealth but encourages its pursuit. It would have every one properly fed, clothed and housed, and living in clean surroundings, convinced that these things are necessary to health and that a healthy body is essential to a healthy mind. In the village of to-day it finds such a lack of these blessings that it would completely refashion it. We have seen it passionately invoked in Gurgaon, and in Lyallpur and the east of the province we have found men's minds quickening with its illumination. The trained hakim is now more sought after than the quack, whose 'medical doctrines would disgrace an English farrier',[1] and the *good* doctor more than the hakim. Medicines are preferred to spells, and inoculation against plague is welcomed where ten years ago it was dreaded.[2] Some even will inoculate their cattle rather than drive them under the potsherd slung across the entrance to the village. Few now object to castration, and notwithstanding religious injunction many Hindus, and most Sikhs, will sell bullock and cow after they cease to be profitable. Untouchability, which Mr. Gandhi calls 'an atrocious doctrine repugnant to the religious sense of man',[1] though still strong in and along the hills and south of the Sutlej, is gradually weakening—in some places for the logical reason that the untouchables no longer eat the flesh of animals that have died.[2] With the spread of the canal and the control that a regular supply of water gives a cultivator over the use of his land, fatalism is less universal, and more labour and skill are applied to farming. And with the spread of co-operation, thrift is growing and waste diminishing. The classic example of waste is the heavy expenditure upon marriages and funerals, and wherever this is excessive, we have found a marked desire to reduce it. Three hundred co-operative Better Living societies are sufficient evidence of this, and many of them are so successful that marriages that used to cost from Rs.500 to Rs.1,000 can now be done for a fifth of the amount. The scale of entertainment on these occasions has been greatly cut down, and far less is spent upon jewellery and clothes. There is a tendency, too, to raise the age of marriage for both girls and boys; and last but not least, a party is arising that questions the wisdom of pardah.

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[1] For further examples see *Punjab Village Surveys*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 126, 159, 165, 180.

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[1] Macaulay's minute on education dated 2nd February 1835, quoted in G. O. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, 1877, p. 406.

[2] Yet in a village only twenty-five miles away from Amritsar it was recently found that recourse was generally had 'to the makers of charms, and to such drugs as the local grocer can supply. It is only when all these means have failed, and probably not till the patient is *in extremis* that real medical advice is sought' (*Punjab Village Surveys, op. cit.*, p. 9).

The western Punjab

The new light is much less diffused in the west of the province. The five factors that have favoured it in the east—the spread of irrigation, co-operation, and education, the improvement of communications, and the experience gained through emigration and war—have had much less play in the west. Fortunately, in many respects the need for it is less. Life is more primitive, and centring round the well rather than the village it is also more individualistic. Religion, too, is more homogeneous, and custom, drawing its sanctions from the simple ethical code of Islam, is less complicated. Useless cattle are not maintained on religious grounds; there is no problem of untouchability; much less is spent upon marriages, and people do not wed so young. Women do not have to work so hard, and when pardah is not observed, their position is comparatively free. Dwellings, too, are cleaner, and their carefully ordered interiors often show a feeling for beauty, vividly expressed in the Attock peasant's remark that a man who found nothing beautiful in a house would leave it spitting.[1] The curse of the west is the poverty and superstition which put the peasant at the mercy of money-lender, landlord, and pir. Both are enemies of the new light, particularly poverty, for the basis of the new order is a good standard of living.

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[1] *Young India*, dated the 3rd October 1929.

[2] In the village mentioned in note 2 on p. 342, a village mainly of Sikh Jats, 'the rules of caste rigorously exclude even the young Chuhra (sweeper) from being taught with the other children of the village' (*ibid.*, p. 73). This shows how far north untouchability spreads. But in the heart of India powerful voices, notably Mr. Gandhi's, are being raised against it. In a recent appeal addressed by Sjt. Jamnalalji to the trustees of Hindu temples the following passage occurs: 'It is an irony of fate that . . . we should have come to treat to-day one-third of our own kith and kin as pariahs worthy of treatment which we may not mete out to dogs. . . . Our weavers, our artisans, our sweepers, our scavengers . . . to these our benefactors . . . we deny social and civic rights—protection, knowledge, intercourse—everything that makes life worth living' (*Young India*, 5th September 1929).

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[1] p. 318.

XIII. THE STANDARD OF LIVING, WOMEN, AND THE PEASANT'S MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE

The Standard of Living

Food

During the last thirty years the Punjab peasant's standard of living has risen materially.[1] This is most marked in the east of the province. There, speaking broadly, his chief need now is better housing. But in the west he is still underfed and poorly clothed. We met many who had only the clothes they stood up in, and many more who were borrowing to obtain food—the result of a poor autumn harvest and the absence of all reserve—and it may be safely stated that those who have to borrow for this purpose do not get enough to eat and have, moreover, to be content with the cheapest and least nutritious grain. From this point of view an increase in production is more urgently needed in the west than in the east. The need is greatest in Muzaffargarh. There the poverty and decay are the despair of those who would cure them. By one of those parallels that make the whole peasant world akin, the author of *England's Green and Pleasant Land* found much the same problem in a corner of rural England, and his remarks are so appropriate to backward areas that I quote them in full. 'How', he asks,[2] 'are these people to be renewed? Can they be renewed? Most of the things of which they have the greatest need can be brought to them only by personal dealing, by patient, persistent, enlightened, long-suffering, personal dealing; by, in the widest sense of the word, religious teaching that reaches out to all they lack.' Then follows a timely word of warning for the impatient idealist. 'There are limits to what can be done for these people, because there are limits to what they can be got to do for themselves; and the reason is that they are a community . . . which is physically and mentally impoverished. For the solution of such a problem it is idle to think of adopting any kind of short cut.' This is sound advice. The best hearts are needed, but also good brains and ample time. If all three are given to Muzaffargarh, in twenty years it should no longer be a reproach to the province. In the eastern Punjab, with the exception of Gurgaon, parts of which are almost as poor as Muzaffargarh, the peasant seems on the whole to have enough to eat, and it was generally admitted that his diet was improving if not in quantity at least in quality and variety. The greater variety is mainly due to the increased consumption of vegetables. Many now grow them, particularly potatoes, who five years ago grew nothing of the kind, and even the high-caste Rajput grows them here and there. And where they cannot be grown, they are often hawked by growers from neighbouring villages or brought out in lorries. In a country that is primarily vegetarian the advantage of this change can hardly be over-estimated. If it becomes general, it will do more for the health of the peasant than all the prophylactics of medicine.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, ch. viii.

[2] p. 237.

In the eastern part of the Punjab the peasant is, on the whole, well enough fed and not badly clothed, but he is miserably housed. Often we have found man, woman, and child sleeping in caverns rather than rooms, their cattle housed amongst them in the same universal dark, ceilings blackened with soot from chimneyless kitchens, and courtyards littered with manure and rubbish. Infested with flies, vermin, and rats, such dwellings would be regular death-traps but for the open-air life lived by most in the courtyard and the fields. As it is, they must prejudice the health of the people, and also, one would think, deaden their minds. The evil is so general that it would almost seem as if most of the 34,000 villages of the province would have to be rebuilt to ensure health and make possible a reasonable standard of living. This may appear Utopian to most, but the process has already begun in districts like Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, where large numbers of returned emigrants have brought back new notions and an abundant supply of money. Without money, of course, nothing can be done, but where it is available, new houses are springing up and old houses are being improved. In the townlet of Bundala, which we visited in Jullundur, nearly half a lakh must have been spent in the last twenty years. Part of the expenditure incurred is doubtless prompted by a desire for display or by a childish imitation of the West—witness, for example, the bogus chimneys; but it would now be almost impossible to find a new house being built on the old cavernous lines, and more and more desire to possess a house that is not only pukka but airy (*hawadar*). If, as sometimes happens, the ground floor of a new house has no windows, it is probably because the owner has a lot of jewellery and cash and fears the burglar and dacoit. There is a double moral in this. On the one hand, less jewellery should be bought, and cash should not be hoarded but deposited in a village bank. On the other, it should be remembered that no material progress is possible without security, and that in this case security means an efficient well-paid police. If a high standard of rural security can be maintained, well-ventilated houses will become the rule; and what is more, men will leave the crowded, dust-laden village to live on their land, to the great improvement of both their health and their farming. This process has already begun in Jullundur, where it is greatly facilitated by the consolidation of holdings, and if it spreads, it may change the whole face of the countryside. One feature of the new houses cannot be too vehemently condemned: most are distressingly ugly, as if a child had been at work with a box of bricks. Outside Gurgaon, where curiously, amidst all the poverty and squalor, there still lurks a sense of beauty, I have seen few buildings with any pretension to architectural merit. Here is a golden opportunity for a good architect with ideas suited to the simplicity of the peasant's life and to the modesty of his purse. Many such men have been found in Europe, as the beauty of cottage and chalet abundantly testifies. Could such a man be found in the Punjab, the village of the future might be made worthy of the new light which now finds most unworthy expression. Another defect, more easily remedied, is the mean disorderly condition of most of the interiors of the new houses. It is a characteristic difference of the two halves of the province that the rudest dwellings in the west are often cleaner and better arranged than the most substantial houses in the east. Is it because the position of women is easier and freer in the west?

Women

Disabilities

Mr. Brayne, whose experiment in Gurgaon has been described in Chapter V, considers that the key to a decent standard of living is an improvement in the position of women. It may not be the only key, but there can be no doubt that the welfare of the village is closely bound up in the welfare of its women. At present their position in the Punjab and elsewhere agrees neither with the old light nor with the new. According to the old light, a Hindu may take nothing, hardly even a glass of water, from his son-in-law; yet now at marriage women are bartered almost like cattle, and a good judge estimates that an element of purchase enters into 70 per cent of the marriages made in the central Punjab.[1] It shows how little the new light has penetrated that the central Punjab prides itself upon being the most enlightened part of the province. Moreover, the practice is, if anything, increasing, and is by no means confined to the uneducated. Addressing students in Sind, Mr. Gandhi said: 'Woman had been described as the "ardhan-angana" or the better half of man. But they had reduced her to the position of a slave, and the result was the state of paralysis in which they found the country.'[1] Another bad practice, more intelligible in a hot country but almost equally injurious, is the custom of early marriage. Happily, in this case, there is change for the better, though it is so slow as to be hardly perceptible. Yet another evil is the custom which prescribes that a woman shall be attended in childbirth by a midwife who is always untrained, generally a menial, and, by an irony which must make angels weep, frequently an untouchable. How often on this tour have we found that she was the wife of a sweeper, a chamar, or a beggar; and sometimes, too, aged, infirm, or even blind. The evil cries to heaven.[2]

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[1] p. 41.

Pardah

Another custom which one would wish changed or modified is the 'four-walled pardah', which confines the women of the higher castes to the four walls of the house and only allows them to go out by daylight if veiled from head to foot, their faces 'which God created for the cheerfulness of the human world' turned to 'a jealous horror' and nothing seen but the hands.[3] The practice, enjoined, so the mullahs say, by the Koran, is confined to the gentry and the well-to-do yeomen. The ordinary peasant cannot afford the special apartments required, nor can he forgo the assistance of his womenfolk in his work. Restricted thus, pardah has become a point of izzat as well as of religion, and as an Ambala Rajput remarked: 'What would remain of the Rajputs if they gave up pardah? They would be just like every one else.'[4] Amongst Hindus, with whom it depends only upon custom, it is weakening; but amongst Muhammadans, backed by both religion and custom and appealing to social ambition as well as to piety, it appears to be spreading. Amongst Rajputs, who include both Hindus and

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[1] *Young India*, 14th February 1929.

[2] In 1928, 530 midwives were under training in the Punjab.

[3] Doughty, *op. cit.*, i. 582.

[4] p. 89.

Muhammadans, it is being undermined by economic processes. Their numbers are increasing and they have become so deeply involved in debt that they are finding it difficult to hold their own against the castes whose womenfolk help them in courtyard and field. 'We are five brothers and five workers in the fields,' said another Ambala Rajput, 'but if there were no pardah we should be ten workers.'[1] There is also the question of health, which begins at last to be a matter of popular concern. A woman who passes her whole life within four narrow walls cannot hope to be so healthy or the mother of such vigorous children as one who is out of doors and at work most of the day. As long as two or three hours' grinding had to be done every day, regular exercise could be obtained; but now that the grain is so often taken to the mill, this is exceedingly difficult—few can afford to give their wives a pardah tennis-court like the pir we met near Multan,[2] and health naturally suffers. It must also suffer from the inhuman conditions imposed by pardah in a country in which the fields are the only latrine. There is also the argument of personal liberty. With increased security there is much less need for confinement; and to confine a woman as if she were in jail is entirely opposed to the new light; and indeed, to the old, for the four-walled pardah was unknown in pre-Muhammadan India and is not even prescribed by the Koran.[3] Mr. Gandhi condemns it for Hindus,[4] and the most enlightened Muhammadans are abandoning it for themselves. Remembering, however, the remark of the Lyallpur Arain—'We have not yet so much education that we can look upon a woman unmoved'[5]—I do not recommend a complete breach with the past but only that the rigour of a cruel custom should be gradually relaxed till full freedom can safely be given.

Work It is one of the many startling contrasts in Indian life that in one village women may be completely invisible, and in the next visible to all working in the fields. The amount of field work varies greatly from tribe to tribe, and within the same tribe from district to district. North of the Beas, it is generally confined to picking the cotton and taking out men their meals: sometimes dung-cakes are made as well. South of the Beas, much more is done: for example, sweeping out house and byre, milking the cattle, chopping the fodder, and sowing, weeding, and reaping. The Arains of Jullundur and the Jats of Rohtak do everything except plough and work the well, and in many parts of the south the women probably work harder than the men. It is difficult for a man, certainly for one who is not a doctor, to say whether so much work is wise, and if not, where the golden mean lies. A few points may, however, be noted. Firstly, if a peasant proprietor is to make both ends meet on a few acres, it is essential that his women-folk should give him, within and without the house, all the help they can. Nothing has struck me more in the peasant countries[1] visited since my tour than the amount of work done by women in the fields. There is almost no kind of labour that I have not seen them doing, and in a district of Austria I found they were rising at four winter and summer—in summer to help on the farm, and in winter to spin. To this arduous labour they are driven by the difficulty in maintaining a good standard of living, but, if one may judge by body and face, they obtain a rich return in health and contentment. Secondly, when women do almost everything done by the men, if grinding has to be done as well, the work is excessive: children are neglected, hours of sleep seriously curtailed, and the women become the slaves of their men. Thirdly, when work is excessive, the giving up of grinding is a blessing, even though it means less nutritious flour; for longer hours can be slept, and the body is fresher for the other tasks of the day. But when work is not excessive, before immemorial tasks like grinding and spinning are abandoned—the wise woman will never give up spinning—there should be something to be put in their place. As long as women are uneducated, Jallan's advice to the widow should not be forgotten: 'Let there be a wall behind you and a spinning-wheel in front: busy yourself with grinding and spinning, and you will pass your days well.'[1] It is a happy consequence of the rising standard of living and of the educational work done amongst women, chiefly by missionaries, that in the central Punjab new forms of domestic handwork are finding their way into the village; for instance, the knitting of jerseys and socks, the sewing of children's clothes, the making of girdles and scarves, and the weaving of dhurries. As this new skill spreads, it should be directed to improving the old forms of handwork—including every kind of embroidery, and to adding such simple things as peasant households need rather than articles more suited to western than to eastern taste or perhaps not needed at all. Two further points have already been noted—the greater freedom of woman in the west of the province, and the greater care bestowed there on the house and its arrangement. On both points the 'progressive' east has something to learn from the 'backward' west, and that this should be so is a tribute to the virtue of the old light. Even with women then the old light should not be forgotten, though for the moment she has more need of the new. Many attempts are now being made in different parts of India to bring the new into her life and home. One of the most promising of these in the Punjab is the starting of over 100 co-operative thrift societies whose members are all women. In a few years they have accumulated nearly a lakh (£7,500).[2] But thrift, though important enough, touches only a small part of woman's life, and what is needed is something akin to the English Rural Institute, whose object is to enrich it at every point. Here, too, a beginning has been made, notably in Bengal.[1]

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[1] p. 64.
[2] p. 272.
[3] See pp. 254, 268.
[4] See *Young India*, dated the 2nd May 1929.
[5] p. 210.

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[1] France, Italy, and Austria.

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[1] p. 103.

[2] On the 31st July 1929 there were 128 societies with a working capital of Rs.90,319. For a detailed description of these societies see the *Punjab Co-operative Societies Report for 1928*, p. 7.

The Peasant's Means of Subsistence

Farming

A peasant proprietor who receives assistance in full measure from his wife may be able to make both ends meet, but he will not be able to gain and maintain the standard of living we have in mind unless he improves his farming, keeps some kind of supplementary live stock, and is fully employed for most of the year. I have tried to make this clear elsewhere,[2] and all I propose to do now is to examine briefly what light this journal throws upon each of the three points. Firstly, then, is the peasant improving his farming? In some areas, parts of Jullundur for instance, his farming is so good that it would be difficult to imagine better. Much of it, however, could be greatly improved, particularly in the west. In the past the west has been sadly neglected. Yet it has two advantages over the east, both of which favour agricultural progress—land is less fragmented, and many live on their farms instead of in villages. It has even a third, for the estates of the big landlords provide an admirable field for experiment. True that as a body they are the least progressive of men, but some amongst them are already giving their more sluggish neighbours a lead. In the east real development is made almost impossible by the intense fragmentation of land, but over 200,000 acres have now been consolidated by co-operative societies,[3] and where this has been done agriculture is leaping forward. Some, like the progressive farmer we met in Jhang,[4] have sufficient energy, intelligence, and thrift to be able to do everything for themselves, but most need organized assistance. For such there is a variety of farms, stations, and associations; and amongst the latter over 100 co-operative Better Farming societies, whose object is to improve the farming of their members, mainly by the supply of good seed and improved implements. Good seed is everywhere appreciated, especially if it is the seed of one of the new types of wheat or cotton produced by the resourceful scientists of the Agricultural Department. But the peasant looks askance at most of the new implements offered him, no doubt because he is 'a devotee of the straight line',[1] but partly also because he cannot afford to buy them and his experience tells him that the smallholder should depend more upon his labour than upon other people's machines. Thus it happens that while his official counsellors are urging upon him the merits of every kind of plough and harrow, he himself with sure instinct is slowly turning to work for which neither plough nor harrow will ultimately be required. I refer to the growing of vegetables, the increase in which is one of the most beneficial changes observed on our tour. I have already emphasized its importance in regard to diet and health. It is almost equally important in regard to yield and work. In increasing yield it adds to a man's income, and in increasing work—work too of a regular kind—it makes it easier for the smallholder to keep himself and his family steadily employed throughout the year.[2] Considering the number of smallholdings in the province—most holdings are probably under ten acres[3]—a vegetable specialist is urgently needed.[4]

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[1] See p. 154.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 290 ff.: see also the author's article on 'The Economic Holding' in *The Agricultural Journal of India*, November 1927 and January 1928.

[3] In 1928–9, 48,709 acres were consolidated.

[4] p. 237.

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[1] p. 251.

[2] In a recent survey of a number of farms round Lyallpur it was found that on most 'from 17 to 20 days' labour was given per acre. . . . In one case the manual labour amounted to 24½ days per acre, but this was due to the growing of thick sugar-cane and vegetables' (Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Publication No. 19, 1928, p. ii.

[3] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 3 n.

[4] The Director of Agriculture stated before the Linlithgow Commission that it was intended to ask for a vegetable specialist in 1929 (*op. cit.*, viii. 211).

Water

The smallholder is lost unless his holding is intensively cultivated. But intensive cultivation postulates both water and manure, a regular supply of the former and an ample supply of the latter. The Punjab is fortunate in having over 20,000 miles of canals; but this good fortune is often abused, and much water—20 per cent it is said[1]—is wasted. In the last thirty years it has been poured forth in such abundance that too little attention has been paid to its economic use or to its careful conservation where canal water is not available. Yet 'water is India's greatest treasure', and both in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur we got a glimpse of what its failure may mean. A large tract in these two districts, involving the fortunes of thousands, is threatened with the disorganization of the whole rural economy by the sinking of the water table below the level of its countless wells; and it is the more serious, because these are two of the best farmed and most congested districts in the province.

Manure

Only less important than water is manure. Ancient India knew this well enough, as is shown by the story in the *Mahabharat* which tells how the peerless goddess Shri took up her abode in the dung of the sacred cow.[2] But the India of the last hundred years has forgotten it and, instead of carefully conserving her fuel resources, has allowed them to be supplemented and even replaced by dung.[3] Where there is no wood, the peasant can now use nothing else, for he is too poor to buy either coal or coke. But where, as in the west of the province, there are still large tracts of waste land and plenty of fuel, he uses it only to simmer the milk. It is commonly supposed that milk cannot be properly simmered without it, but north of the Jhelum it is not even used for this.[4] If therefore substitutes could be found, all or most of the manure of the country might go into the fields and India's soil would be greatly enriched and her women saved from the uncleanly task of converting dung into cakes. How great is the present loss may be judged from an estimate made in 1908 that the country loses 6½ annas on every maund of cow-dung burnt as fuel,[1] and from another made twenty years later that a family of five uses about 220 maunds (8 tons) a year as fuel, which, if applied to their land, would add Rs.67 to the value of their crops.[2] Dimly, very dimly, the peasant is beginning to perceive the importance of this, and where farming is becoming more intensive, less manure is used for fuel and substitutes like cotton-stalks and even shisham leaves are used instead.[3] In this respect, and perhaps in other respects as well, the country to which India should turn for guidance is China. There the manure pit is in common use; 'people regularly search for and collect droppings along the country and caravan roads',[4] night soil is most carefully husbanded, and all waste products taken back to the field. But 'before doing so they are housed against waste from weather, intelligently compounded and patiently worked at through one, three, or even six months, in order to bring them into the most efficient form to serve as manure for the soil, or as feed for the crop'.[5] As the first step in this direction Mr. Brayne has introduced the manure pit into Gurgaon.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 444.

[2] The story is told in *Young India*, 13th June 1929.

[3] Cf.: Lo, I have given thee cow's dung . . . and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith (Ezekiel iv. 15).

[4] See p. 314.

Poultry

I come now to the second point—the question of supplementary live stock. By this I mean live stock that can be largely maintained on the waste products of a farm. The commonest forms are poultry and pigs. I have never met a peasant in Europe who did not keep one or the other, and rarely one who did not keep both.

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[1] See the evidence of the Director of the Geological Survey before the Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.*, i. 123.

[2] *Seasonal Notes of the Punjab Agric. Dept.*, October 1928, p. 26.

[3] pp. 190, 203: cf. also *Punjab Village Surveys*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 179.

[4] F. H. King, *Farmers of Forty Centuries*, 1927, p. 176.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The Italian peasant of the Epilogue with his fifty hens, his rabbits and pigeons, and his 360-pound pig is typical. It is idle, of course, to urge Muhammadans to keep pigs—by some the mere mention of the word is considered a sin[1]—but all who can should keep poultry. This record shows that many are doing it in the west Punjab, but few in the east. But even in the west, fowls are generally kept only for domestic consumption, and only in isolated cases did we find people keeping more than ten or twenty. When asked why he does not keep fowls, the peasant invariably replies—because they pollute the fodder, or eat the seed, or devour the young shoots. But fowls have the same habits all over the world, and if they can be kept in control in Europe, they can also be controlled in India. More serious are the dangers of disease. In Attock, one of the few districts where poultry are common, chicken cholera last year had a devastating effect,[2] and in Jullundur we heard in one place of heavy casualties from lice. The recent appointment of a poultry expert should do something to mitigate this, but what is one expert amongst so many? Though poultry farming in a modern sense hardly exists, there are many in the north who breed on primitive lines,[3] and pioneers are appearing all over the province. Some of them we met, and their strange variety—they included a Rajput, a Seyyed, a master, a mullah, a barber, and a tanner—encourages the hope that in time poultry farming may become popular. That a Rajput should be amongst them is particularly surprising, for Rajputs regard fowls as unclean and the keeping of them as so derogatory that a Rajput once told a high official that he would rather be dead than do it.[4] Another significant case is that of the master—an Arain—who said he paid his land revenue out of his poultry.[1] The barber's case, too, suggests a possibility. He is a matriculate who is trying to earn his living by poultry farming after first being trained for the purpose.[2] Could not many of the unemployed agriculturist matriculates do likewise?

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[1] A Muhammadan member of the Co-operative Department once mentioned it in the presence of a maulvi. The maulvi said it was a sin to utter such a filthy word and he (my informant) should clean his mouth, which had become polluted.

[2] p. 314.

[3] See Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.*, viii. 823.

[4] Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.*, viii. 670.

Education

The agriculturist matriculate raises one of the most difficult economic questions of the day. For long the cultivator has been urged to send his sons to school, and he is at last complying. If, as in most cases, the education goes no further than the primary school, the boys return readily enough to the land, but they learn very little and what they learn they soon forget. If, on the other hand, they go on to the high school and matriculate, they learn enough to make them want to leave the land and enter Government service—service is so much less arduous and so much more secure than farming. But the supply of matriculates is far greater than the demand. Where therefore, as in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, schools abound, the villages are full of unemployed matriculates. One would think that having failed to secure service they would return to the plough. The wisest do, or would do so if they could. But here is the irony of the case. By the time a boy has matriculated, he has become unfit for the life of a cultivator: he can neither do the work nor support the heat. This was so generally said that it is difficult to disbelieve it. And if it is true and cannot be remedied, cultivators should be dissuaded from educating their boys beyond the middle standard, up to which, it seems, they do not suffer. But is there no remedy? Amongst the many peasants whom I have recently met in Europe I have never heard it suggested that education came between a boy and work on the farm, except in so far as it tempted him to leave the country for the town. The ordinary boy lives on his father's farm and during the long holidays learns to take a hand in the farming; the daily walk to and from school keeps him fit, and being well nourished both body and mind retain their vigour. Is it perhaps the case with the Indian high-school boy that he is underfed and works too hard at his books during the term and too little on the land during the holidays? Is it even the case that he feels it derogatory to work on the land at all? The answer to these questions we must leave to educationists; and we may safely do so, for in the Punjab they are well aware of the difficulties of rural education and are doing their best to solve them.

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[1] p. 90.

[2] p. 173.

Domestic Industries

The third point to be considered is the question of occupation. The smallholder who would live well must be prepared to work hard and at all times. But in India he has idle seasons when his land does not give him enough to do. He is then like a petty official on leave who is on half-pay or on no pay at all. The official puts himself into this position as rarely as possible, but many peasants are forced into it once or twice a year. The only way they can avoid it is to have some kind of profitable occupation which can be done at home. In Japan 'more than one-third of the farming population keep themselves afloat by the rearing of silk-worms',[1] and in Europe the importance of domestic industries has always been understood. In the Punjab it has always been ignored. In Hoshiarpur lac is extracted from the ber tree but rarely by the owner of the tree.[2] In some districts baskets are made for home use, but in two so poor as Muzaffargarh and Gurgaon they are bought. String is often made for beds, and sometimes webbing (*newar*) and rope. In the sub-montane districts of Gurdaspur and Sialkot—the plains are too hot[3]— a little sericulture is done, and in a few hilly tracts bees are kept.[4] But nowhere is anything done that could be called a home industry, unless it is the production of ghi, from which a few districts with large grazing areas derive a considerable income.[1] The cultivator's usual excuse is that he has no time. Where farming is at all intensive and depends on the well, he is probably right. 'We have so much work', said a Jullundur Sikh, 'that we have no time to comb our hair.'[2] In canal districts the excuse may also be accepted, though it hardly squares with the results of recent inquiries made on a number of colony farms.[3] But in areas mainly dependent on rain there are certainly seasons when the peasant has too little to do, and if he pleads the contrary, it can only be because he is lazy or unsystematic in his work. In saying this I do not forget that in the slack months he has to repair his house, sheds, and embankments, and carry his manure; and in times of scarcity he must also lop tree and bush to get fodder for his cattle. These miscellaneous tasks are performed in no great haste and doubtless give the cultivator the feeling that he has enough to do. That he does not do more is probably explained by the remark of the Gurgaon peasant: 'We only do farming: we have no concern with anything else.'[4] In the Indian village every man has his appointed task, and no one ever thinks of performing any other. The result is, the cultivator does not know how to use his hands and is tempted to despise those who do.[5] No wonder then that home industries hardly exist. And to make matters worse, spinning amongst women is fast going out of fashion. As in Europe—the process there is not complete—the mill-made cloth is driving out the homespun. It is admitted that homespun lasts longer, but six different processes and five different people are involved in the conversion of the cotton into cloth,[1] and the only process involved in obtaining cloth from the mills is a walk to the bazaar.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 281.

[2] p. 15.

[3] The Director of Agriculture's evidence, Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[4] The Entomologist's evidence, *ibid.*, p. 864.

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[1] 'The production of ghi has been described as the principal home industry of the province,' *Chenal Colony S. R.*, p. 52.

[2] p. 177.

[3] See Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry, No. 19.

[4] p. 144.

[5] See Linlithgow Commission, *op. cit.*, viii. 376.

Mr. Gandhi and the Spinning-wheel

If Mr. Gandhi is to be believed, that walk to the bazaar is the peasant's undoing. Mr. Gandhi's faith in the spinning-wheel is known to all and is regarded by most as an impracticable anachronism. When the peasants we met on our tour heard that he would have them spin as well as women, all said at once it was not their custom, and that was enough to put the idea out of court. One village admitted that the idea was good, but said 'the march of the times' was against it. Many of those whose sympathies with Mr. Gandhi are keenest would endorse this. Yet, if it is a good idea, should it be condemned, whatever men may think of the times, until every effort has been made to see whether it can be established? This is too large a question to be answered here, but two points must be noted. The first is this. We all know that the Indian peasant is poor, often desperately poor, but Mr. Gandhi has seen more clearly than any one else that if he is to escape from his poverty, he must husband every penny of his substance and every moment of his time.[2] Secondly, with a faith and devotion that every lover of the peasant must deeply admire he has set himself to try to provide for every home in India that needs it, an industry which will add both to its resources and to its employment. Some say that the addition to resources will be negligible, and in truth it will be small enough—Mr. Gandhi himself puts it at only two annas a day [3]—but those who have any knowledge of Indian standards and of Indian poverty will regard any addition as welcome. Two annas a day is nearly Rs.50 a year, and every peasant knows how quickly this amount when borrowed can turn into hundreds. If, as is probable, the Punjab does not require the spinning-wheel as much as other parts of India, it is because, thanks to canal and well, it is more prosperous and more fully occupied. But even in the Punjab there are areas where men are poor enough to need it, and indirectly a peasant reminded us of this in Multan when he said, 'We are poor folk and must make our own clothes.'[1]

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[1] p. 99.

[2] Cf. 'Every one who idles away a single minute becomes to that extent a burden upon his neighbours' (*Young India*, 11th April 1929).

[3] *Ibid.*, dated 7th March 1929.

Emigration

Even in the more prosperous areas the peasant is hard put to it to live for any length of time in comfort. When the standard of living is low, men multiply so fast—the possibilities of birth control are hardly known in the village [2]—that in congested areas most families sooner or later find themselves with too many mouths to feed. The result may be seen in the continual stream of emigration from the central districts. About 4,000 went last year from Hoshiarpur and Jullundur,[3] and far more would go if the doors of the more attractive countries were thrown open wider. The effect upon village life might then be as great as it has been in southern Italy and Sicily, where the peasant proprietor has been saved by the returned emigrant from liquidation.[4] As it is, the effects are remarkable. How far they are good was one of the subjects of our inquiry. Materially they are undeniably good. As one person put it—'where twenty persons starved, twenty now have bread'. In the returned emigrant we see, almost for the first time, the peasant with capital—as much as a lakh may be brought back [5]—and we see too the effect of capital on his position. He can now build himself a good house, sink a well, buy good oxen, and not only shake off the money-lender but, if he likes, become a money-lender himself. The moral and intellectual results are more difficult to measure. If he becomes a money-lender—and many do—they are likely to be bad; and in any case he is apt to lose his capacity for hard field-work and spends his money too fast. Some too—at most 10 or 20 per cent, it was said—do not return and go to the bad. But on the whole the verdict of the countryside seems to be that emigration makes a man more intelligent, keener on education and clean surroundings, and a better neighbour.

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[1] p. 257.
[2] See p. 38.
[3] pp. 28, 161.
[4] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 289.
[5] p. 33.

In all this we are again reminded of the Italian peasant; for he too had emigrated and returned with a modest fortune. In many ways he is typical of the prosperous small peasant proprietor in Europe—in the variety of his crops and live stock, the self-sufficiency of his farm, the simplicity of his life, and the industry which made him and his wife rise every morning at 5.30. Though there may be great differences of degree between the circumstances of the peasant in India and Europe, whether one talks to one or to the other, one is conscious of the same problems, the same conflict with nature, the same instinctive belief in the unseen, the same devotion to the family, the same love of the land, and the same simplicity of mind, touched too with the same beauty. But in one respect there is difference. The European peasant is entirely free of the inexorable economic restrictions imposed upon the Indian by a social and religious system which is completely indifferent to material progress. The difference is fundamental, and as long as it remains, the Indian peasant can never hope to emerge from his poverty. The question is whether he should hold to the old light with all its disadvantages, or follow the new with all its dangers; or whether some intermediate course, illuminated both by the old light and the new, is possible. The final chapter is an attempt to answer this most difficult question.

XIV. RELIGION AND ECONOMICS IN THE INDIAN VILLAGE[1]

The question put at the end of the last chapter cannot be answered without some understanding of the relation between religion and economics. We must therefore briefly consider this first.

The West

The economist of the Middle Ages, says Mr. Tawney, started 'from the position that there is a moral authority to which considerations of economic expediency must be subordinated', and that there is 'no place for any economic activity which is not related to a moral end'.[2] In those days religion imposed a number of restraints upon the avarice of man, such as the prohibition of usury and the doctrine of the just price. With the commercial expansion of the sixteenth century this supremacy was challenged, and by the end of the seventeenth century religion could no longer dictate to economics. Shreds of authority, however, remained, for the doctrine of the just price, in its aspect of fair wages, persisted into the eighteenth century, and even Adam Smith, in urging that man should be 'free to pursue his own interest in his own way', added the rider that he must 'not violate the laws of justice'.[3] In the intense competition of the nineteenth century this fundamental principle of his teaching was forgotten, and in the name of *laissez-faire* and the law of supply and demand, religion and economics were almost completely divorced. With the twentieth century came reaction, and writers like Nicholson, Ashley, and Toynbee began to doubt whether the divorce was good for either.[1] The war, which sprang from the divorce of both economics and politics from religion, brought the whole question to a head, and now, as Tawney observes, 'the line of division between the spheres of religion and secular business . . . is shifting . . . and the boundaries are once more in motion'.[2] Some even of the old medieval doctrines, so contemptuously rejected in the nineteenth century, are being revived. The trade unionist has taken up the doctrine of fair wages, the co-operator is busy with the problem of the just price, and only two years ago England passed a bill to control usury.[3]

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[1] The basis of this chapter is an address delivered before the Indian Economic Association in January 1928.

[2] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1926, pp. 31, 39.

[3] *The Wealth of Nations* (Everyman's Library), p. 180.

But though in some respects the tendency would appear to be—back to the Middle Ages—, it is not really so. In the Middle Ages economic activities were dominated less by religion than by custom. The core of this custom was necessity, for it was based upon the *enforced* association of individuals in more or less isolated groups, and only the outer crust was formed by religion or ethics. Custom gave way to expediency, whose rule is based upon the unfettered competition of individuals no longer compelled by their isolation to live and act together but each 'free to pursue his own interest in his own way'. By this rule our economic activities are now governed, but some who think it perilous would subordinate economics once more to religion or ethics; not, however, to the old medieval code framed by necessity and custom, but to a system of morality founded upon the *voluntary* association of individuals, acting freely together for common as well as personal advantage; the best and most practical expression of which is the world-wide movement of co-operation.[4]

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[1] See J. Shield Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, 1901, iii. 428 et seq.; W. J. Ashley, *Economic History*, 4th edition, 1906, i. 380–1; and Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century in England*, 1906.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

[3] Money-lenders Act, 1927.

[4] Cf. 'Competition . . . of old . . . was hindered and controlled by custom; in the future, like the other great forces of society, it will be controlled by morality' (Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 250).

India In India, too, the boundaries between economics and religion are shifting, but in the contrary direction, that is to say, in favour of economics. For centuries the economic life of the country has been dominated by custom, which, if not religious in origin, has in the passage of time become largely religious in sanction. The village of to-day is still medieval in outlook and would probably accept the two fundamental assumptions commonly made by medieval writers, that economic interests are subordinate to salvation which is the real business of life, and that the rules of morality are binding upon economic conduct.[1] The word 'morality', however, it would regard as almost synonymous with custom. In the last thirty years, however, a change has set in, and in the Punjab both core and crust show signs of crumbling. The isolation of centuries is breaking down, the means of subsistence are becoming less precarious, and poverty less general. A higher standard of living is emerging, and with it the centre of gravity in the village is beginning to shift from the basis of divinely appointed custom to the more dynamic basis of man-made economics. The process has not yet gone very far, but, as this journal shows, it is clearly discernible.

Islam It will make for clearness if Hindu and Muhammadan are separately considered. I take the Muhammadan first. Islam is primarily an ethical code, which was designed for a people of simple habits, who lived mainly by pasture, a little by trade, and hardly at all by agriculture, and who were in constant danger of attack from their enemies. Its basic precepts are extremely simple and as clear-cut as the outlines of the Arabian desert which gave them birth. The good Muslim must believe that God is one and that Muhammad is his prophet; he must pray five times a day, fast in Ramzan, pay the zakát, and if he can afford it, go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. These five duties are fundamental, and there is a sixth only less important—he must neither pay nor accept 'riba'. For our present purpose this is the most interesting, as it illustrates the close connexion in Islam between economics and religion. Maulvi Muhammad Ali translates the word 'riba' as usury, and the most important passage on the subject in the Koran he renders thus: 'Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom the devil has prostrated by his touch does arise. That is because they say, trading is like usury; and God has allowed trading and forbidden usury.'[1] And we may also quote the further passage: 'O you who believe, do not devour usury, making additions again and again.'[2] Till recently these verses have usually been considered as prohibiting every form of interest and not merely what is now commonly known as usury. There is nothing in this that need surprise any student of history, for in Europe it is only in the last 300 years that the taking of interest has not been considered a heinous sin, and it was not till the end of the seventeenth century and only after a prolonged and bitter struggle between the forces of economics and religion that religion accepted defeat, modified its code, and allowed interest to be taken at will.[3] Islam, on the other hand, is still much where it was 1,200 years ago, as some think with disastrous results to its development. The authors of *The Life of the Prophet of Arabia* regard this as one of the three leading causes of the decay of Islam. 'At the present time', they write, 'credit is indispensable to all great undertakings, and when bankers have become the real masters of the world, Islam by adhering with exaggerated rigidity to the text of the verse is momentarily reduced to financial and political ruin.'[4]

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[1] Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

The taking of Interest

Now the interesting fact to note is that the fortress of orthodoxy is being rapidly invested by modern forces, and that within the fortress there are divided counsels. One party is for holding the fortress at all costs; and that it is not without strength is shown by the fact that the unclaimed interest on deposits made by Muhammadans in the Post Office Savings Bank amounts to lakhs of rupees.[1] The other party is in favour of distinguishing between interest and usury and of allowing the one and forbidding the other. The question whether a Muslim may lawfully become a member of a co-operative society which charges but does not pay interest, has already been decided by the highest Muslim authority in favour of the co-operative society.[2] This has brought the besieging forces perilously near the gates of the fortress, and it looks as if it were only a question of time before further ground would have to be surrendered. The man-at-arms on the walls with money in his pocket is already parleying with the enemy, and many are even deserting. In fact, as we have seen,[3] the Punjabi Muhammadan is beginning to take interest like any ordinary money-lender. At first, to satisfy his conscience, he takes it indirectly in service or in kind; but sooner or later he finds it convenient to take it in cash. The higher standard of living is difficult to maintain, and money-lending offers larger returns than any other form of business open to the cultivator. The temptation therefore is irresistible, and religious principle is obliged to give way to economic advantage.

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[1] Pt. iii, ch. 2, 274 (tr. Maulvi Muhammad Ali).

[2] *Ibid.*, pt. iv, ch. 3, 129.

[3] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 196.

[4] E. Dinet and Sliman Ben Ibrahim, *The Life of the Prophet, &c.*, 1918, p. 304.

There are other tendencies in modern Islam which reflect the influence of the economic forces of the day, for example, the tendency towards monogamy, the weakening of the pardah system, the difficulty of combining the zakát with a higher standard of living and the Ramzan fast with a higher standard of work. The attitude towards pardah is particularly significant. Its religious sanction is generally admitted, but, as we have seen more than once, only the better to do can afford to keep it, and even amongst them economic stress is making many critical. In some Muhammadan countries the conflict between economics and religion has been even more marked. In Afghanistan it was an important factor in the undoing of the late Amir, and in Turkey it has ended in the almost complete secularization of the country.[1]

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[1] *The Light*, dated 1st August 1927. At the Soodmand conference held at Aligarh in October 1927, a resolution calling upon Muhammadans to start banking was rejected.

[2] See *Annual Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies of the Federated Malay States*, 1925–6, pp. 12, 13.

[3] p. 186.

Hinduism

In Hinduism we enter a totally different atmosphere, and one so elusive and so pervasive that it is difficult to describe it in a few words. In Islam, the Westerner who knows his Old Testament and is at all familiar with conditions in the Middle Ages finds nothing that he cannot quickly understand. But in Hinduism he finds almost a new world. On the one hand, he is conscious of conditions which he supposes may have existed when his remote ancestors worshipped stocks and stones; and on the other, he may at any moment find himself caught up to transcendental heights where he can scarcely breathe. The transition is often as abrupt as the change from plain to mountain in the Punjab, and recalls to my mind the first time I found myself travelling from Lahore to Ambala. Looking out upon the endless flat empty spaces around me, I felt almost as if I beheld infinity, and the chill of the primitive void entered my heart. But suddenly I became aware of the most amazing sight. The Himalayas stood before me flushed with the setting sun, and instead of infinity I beheld eternity. In dealing with the peasant we are entirely upon the plain and rarely, if ever, do we catch even a glimpse of the hills. Indeed, we should hardly know that they existed but for the sight of three mighty rivers which have their source in the distant heights and profoundly influence conditions on the plain. The first is the river of Karma, the second Ahimsa, and the third Pantheism.[1] Some would call the last polytheism, since it is split into innumerable channels each dedicated to a different god. Apart from the influence of these three streams, we may say that the Hindu peasant's religion has been moulded entirely by his surroundings, and to such effect that it has been observed that 'a Hindu eats religiously, drinks religiously, bathes religiously, and sins religiously'.[2] In other words, in Hinduism, religion and economics are fused into one, and the result is a way of life distinct from every other way of life in the world. In this fusion, so far as the peasant is concerned, the most important element is economics, and we may say that three-fourths of his religion derives not from God with a capital G but from nature with a very big N. In his *Asiatic Studies* Lyall observes that nearly all Hindu practices that have obtained the sanction of religion 'are really founded upon some material interest'; and he adds that a natural religion merely reflects and records mankind's lot upon earth.[3]

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[1] See two articles by Raymond Lacoste in the *Observer*, dated the 7th and 14th April 1929.

Superstitions In western Europe, a kindly, if fickle, nature has to a great extent been subdued to the purposes of man; but in India, nature is a goddess of overwhelming power and incalculable caprice, in whose hands the peasant unaided is as completely powerless as a subject in the hands of a pitiless despot. But, as a despot may be humoured, so may a goddess be placated. Hence the birth of innumerable rites and superstitions, which are a feature of all natural religions and from which few of us are entirely free. According to Lyall, these superstitions are 'the shadows and phantasmagoria of human passions, and of inexplicable calamities from the earliest times'; and with remarkable perception he adds: 'we are changing the whole atmosphere in which fantastic superstitions grow and flourish', and 'we may expect that these old forms of supernaturalism will suddenly thaw and subside without any outward stroke upon them and without long premonitory symptoms of internal dissolution'.[1] This is just what is happening at the present moment in the Punjab, and the thaw is most pronounced in the centre of the province, where economic progress is most advanced. And the change goes much further than mere superstition. It is slowly affecting the peasant's attitude towards life. We need only recall what has been said about fatalism. This idea is rooted deep in the mind of man wherever he feels himself entirely in nature's grip; and in the outlying parts of the province, where there has been little economic change and the harvest is a gamble in rain, it is as deeply rooted as ever. But in the canal colonies, where for the first time in his life the Punjab peasant sees nature partially subdued to his purposes and yielding her increase not simply 'as God wills' but as man labours, we find the beginnings of a new outlook which is vividly expressed in the peasant's remark: 'Manure is a second God.'[2]

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[1] According to the doctrine of Karma, a person's lot is entirely governed by his actions in this and in previous existences. The doctrine of Ahimsa forbids taking the life of any living creature. 'It has given a definite bias to the history of the country for the last 3,000 years and over, and it has not ceased to be a living force in the lives of India's millions even to-day' (Mr. Gandhi in *Young India*, dated 21st March 1929).

[2] Quoted by Dean Inge, *Outspoken Essays* (2nd Series), 1925, p. 68.

[3] *Asiatic Studies*, 1899, i. 87.

Cattle and Ahimsa

We may say then that no important economic change can take place without influencing popular Hinduism. This raises the interesting question whether the change that is now taking place will affect the regard for animal life, and more particularly the sanctity of the cow, which is one of the central doctrines of Hinduism. 'Call it prejudice, call it passion,' said a Hindu to Miss Mayo, 'call it the height of religion, but this is an undoubted fact that in the Hindu mind nothing is so deep-rooted as the sanctity of the cow.'[3] In a sense it may almost be

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

[2] p. 38.

[3] *Mother India*, 1927, p. 203.

said that Hinduism has translated the cow from the field to the temple. It is possible to get her back from the temple to the field? Will the Hindu ever consent to the slaughter of his useless cattle? Will he even agree to the killing of the wild animals that prey upon his crops? Hinduism replies: *Ahimsa parmo dharma*—to kill nothing is the greatest virtue. And in the Punjab we have seen that in the districts south of the Sutlej, where Hinduism is dominant, those who sell their cattle to the butcher are ostracized,[1] and that in 1928 the slaughter of an entirely useless cow led to a serious Hindu Muhammadan riot in Gurgaon.[2] We saw too—significant fact—that 50 per cent of the cattle in this tract were 'rubbish'.[3] At the same time we found that in the central districts, where Hinduism has to contend with the influence of Muhammadanism and the standard of living is rising, useless cattle are freely sold by Hindu and Sikh to the butcher, and that even south of the Sutlej, when scarcity occurs, many are driven by economic necessity to sell their superfluous stock, though few dare do it openly. Outside the Punjab, too, the old light is coming into conflict with the new. The protagonist of the new is Mr. Gandhi. With characteristic insight and fearlessness he writes: 'Measures for preventing our cattle from degeneration are more important than the measures for saving them from the butcher's knife.'[4] He even thinks that it may be necessary to kill monkeys if the growing of vegetables and fruit trees requires it.[5] In 1928 he was actually a party to the killing of a sick calf that was slowly dying.[6] It is typical, however, of the deep-seated abhorrence of the taking of life that the Hindu world was profoundly stirred by this and that a public meeting was held in Bombay to condemn it.[7] Some may think that this attitude derives from darkness rather than from any light old or new. But this is to forget that it is merely an extension of the European view that human life is sacred to a conviction, justified by a belief in Pantheism and the transmigration of the soul, that *all* life is sacred. It is to forget, too, that many peasants feel towards their cattle as the typical Englishman feels towards his horse. 'When a bullock has worked ten years for me,' said a cultivator we met, 'am I to sell it because it can work no longer? I am not so entirely without pity as that.'[1]

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[1] p. 97.

[2] p. 134.

[3] p. 104.

[4] *Young India*, dated 7th March 1929.

[5] *Ibid.*, dated 4th October 1928.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Civil and Military Gazette*, dated 20th October 1928.

The Future

Enough has perhaps been said to show, firstly, that there is in India an unusually close connexion between economics and religion, and secondly, that the nature of the connexion varies with the religion. With Islam, religion has largely dictated to economics; but with Hinduism economics dictated to religion till the Brahmin arose and set economics like a fly in the amber of the Brahminic religion, where it has stayed for over 2,000 years. Now new and powerful economic forces are at work and the boundaries between economics and religion, once regarded as immutable, are slowly beginning to move. Hinduism is faced with the question of the cow, and Islam with the questions of interest and pardah, and sooner or later both must face the question of birth control, if an escape is desired from the poverty of the past, for at present men are multiplying too fast to be anything but poor. In the past, both Hinduism and Islam cared little whether a man was rich or poor. That he must live was of course admitted, but that he required anything more than the bare necessities of life was never seriously considered. The Hindu was taught to regard the material world as *Maya*, and the Muhamadan to fix his mind upon the compensations of paradise. The justification for this attitude was that poverty appeared inevitable and custom inexorable. But now the spread of road, rail, and canal is mitigating the one, and the diffusion of knowledge undermining the other. The question therefore arises—what should be the peasant's attitude towards the change? Should we counsel him to cleave to his religion and be content with his poverty, assuring him that this is the path of salvation? Or following Western example, shall we advise him to dethrone custom in favour of expediency and abandon ancient laws and fealties in favour of comfort and a higher standard of living? Or profiting by the mistakes of the West, shall we try and find him some middle course, illuminated by both the old light and the new, avoiding the superstition and ignorance which darken the one, and the materialism and rapacity which cloud the other? These are far-reaching questions touching at one point the modest household lamp and at another the eternal stars.[1] It may be said that they should be left to the peasant to think out for himself. But, as Mr. Gandhi says, 'he is too much occupied with the burden of his hard and precarious existence' to be able to do this.[2] We must therefore attempt some answer ourselves.

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[1] p. 62.

The Gospel of Poverty

The first point to be emphasized is that in India about 224 millions are dependent upon agriculture and live under conditions which are incompatible with anything like a European standard of living—unless fundamentally changed. Those who dislike fundamental changes may prefer to make a virtue out of a necessity and aim at developing to the utmost the qualities that spring from poverty when voluntarily accepted. To the fatalistic, poverty seems the only possible lot. 'We are no men,' said an Ajmer peasant to whom the attractions of the West were being explained, 'and luxuries enjoyed by those who cultivate in Europe are not meant for us, as we are doomed merely to fill our bellies by scratching the soil.' In the days that Christ walked the earth, poverty was regarded by many amongst the Jews 'as the price of faithfulness to the divine law' and 'as the guarantee of divine recompense and salvation',[1] and throughout the ages in India poverty and saintliness have gone hand in hand. But, however consonant this may be with Indian tradition, it may be doubted whether the gospel of poverty will appeal to the peasant once he realizes that the material blessings of life are within his reach. And it is certainly not a gospel that the ordinary Westerner can advocate with any feeling of conviction, for in the West material welfare is regarded as the basis of all well-being. 'Some people', said Lord Buckmaster, 'talk about the ennobling effect of a struggle with poverty. The people who talk like that have never known the struggle. It is the most degrading, the most demoralizing struggle to which a human being can be put.' [2]

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[1] 'They laugh not only at our modest household lamps but also at the eternal stars' (Rabindranath Tagore, *The Wreck*, p. 108).

[2] *Young India*, dated 4th October 1928.

The Gospel of Gain

The gospel of poverty, therefore, is not likely to be accepted. Are we then to advise the peasant to give full play to the economic forces of the day and in the conflict between economics and religion to side with the economist and not with mullah or priest? Shall we encourage him to multiply his wants and add to his possessions that he may enjoy an ever higher standard of living? Shall we develop the acquisitive, the possessive, and the competitive instincts on the ground that the end is prosperity and the means hard work? For, if the gospel of poverty is allied to saintliness, the gospel of unlimited gain, as we may call it, is allied to efficiency. In considering this we should remember that this gospel is wholly opposed to the old light and is condemned by the two most remarkable Indian personalities of the day. Mr. Gandhi's attitude is familiar to all, and Sir Rabindranath Tagore's is not very different. The ancient culture of the East, he says, is 'the culture that enjoins man to look for his true wealth and power in his inner soul.'[1] And in another passage he remarks: 'Let our civilization take its firm stand upon the basis of social co-operation and not upon that of economic exploitation and conflict.'[2] It is also opposed to all that is best in the new light. For instance, Dean Inge says that if he were asked to state in a word the cause of 'the universal discontent and malaise which have overtaken Western civilization', he would answer 'Secularism'.[3] And of modern capitalism Mr. Keynes writes that it is 'absolutely irreligious, without internal union, without much public spirit, often, though not always, a mere congeries of possessors and pursuers'. And he adds: 'One begins to wonder whether the material advantages of keeping business and religion in different compartments are sufficient to balance the moral disadvantages.'[4] With these judgements before us, and remembering the hideous desolation of the black country in England and the appalling housing conditions of the industrial quarter in Bombay, can we doubt that the gospel of unlimited gain should be rejected?

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[1] F. C. Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*, 1926, p. 122.

[2] Speech in the House of Lords on a bill to facilitate birth control.

The Gospel of Sufficiency and Service

What then is left to us? Is there no alternative between the gospel which says to the peasant—You are poor and poor you must remain; but because you are poor, you are more content than those who are rich, and some of you may even become saints: and the gospel which says—Work your hardest, gain all you can; and though you may not be happy or content, you can become prosperous and efficient? Before we answer this question, we must briefly reconsider the peasant's position. At present he stands between the old light and the new. Like a man walking at night with a lantern who suddenly finds himself confronted with an approaching car, he is dazzled by the headlights of the new age and can scarcely see the modest lamp at his side. Yet dim as it is, this lamp has for him a special value, because it has guided him through the centuries, and it does not shut out the light of the stars. Through it he has attained a simple, if primitive, relationship with both God and his neighbour; and if the result is poverty and ignorance, it is because superstition has come between him and God, and custom between him and some of his neighbours. The value of the new light lies in the importance it attaches to knowledge, freedom, and effort, and its dazzling attraction in the escape it offers from poverty. Its danger is that knowledge, freedom, and effort may be prostituted by the few to the exploitation of the many—the fifty years' supremacy of the money-lender in the Punjab is a case in point—and that the escape from poverty may lead to materialism. What then is wanted is some gospel that will synthesize the old light and the new; which, on the one hand, will preserve the corporate life of the village and the villager's comparative indifference to material values, and, on the other, will secure to every man, and also to every woman, all that is indispensable to what Aristotle calls the good life.[1] Such a synthesis may, I think, be found in what I would call the gospel of sufficiency and service.

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[1] *Nationalism*, p. 52.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

[4] *A Short View of Russia*, 1925, p. 25.

Sufficiency

The gospel of sufficiency is old enough to have been described by Solomon. 'Give me', he says, 'neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.'[2] And it is approved by two great writers of antiquity of very opposite character. 'To be self-sufficing is the end, and the best,' says Aristotle; and he adds pertinently: 'The amount of property which is needed for a good life is not unlimited.'[3] The other writer is St. Paul. 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content; for the love of money is the root of all evil.'[4] In more modern phrase the gospel says that if a man would live contented, he should set a limit to his wants. This sounds easy enough, but there is nothing that men to-day find more difficult. Desiring ever to add to their possessions and mistaking comfort for civilization,[1] they fall an easy prey to the host of traders whose great object is to add indefinitely to their wants. Diogenes' paradox may not be literally true, that 'a man's wealth may be estimated in terms of the things which he can do without',[2] but it is certainly true, as Toynbee says, that 'the perpetual satisfying of wants followed by the springing up of new wants' is 'the secret of individual unrest and disappointment'.[3] There was wisdom in the old medieval morality which numbered avarice amongst the seven deadly sins. And, says Ashley, it was not what we mean by avarice to-day, but 'an eagerness for gain beyond that necessary to maintain a man in his rank of life'.[4] Great moralists like Luther and Melanchthon thought that the peasant's life was the best, because it was 'least touched by the corroding spirit of commercial calculation';[5] and if one may judge by the choruses of the Bacchae, a great Greek poet felt the same. And it was Plutarch who over 1,800 years ago wrote: 'Greedy desire, violently to take from others, and unjustly to occupy that is none of theirs, is never in right husbandmen.'[6] His too are the pregnant words: 'There is no exercise or occupation in the world which so suddenly bringeth a man to love and desire quietness, as doth husbandry and tillage.'[7] With all his hardships, perhaps because of them, the peasant is still, I believe, the most contented man in the modern world, and since this contentment is one of his most precious assets, everything possible should be done to preserve it and place it upon the firm foundations of the good life. The richer tracts of the Punjab are a warning of the danger of adding to material wealth without regard for spiritual values;[1] and a recent novel called *Murugan the Tiller* suggests that the same lesson may be drawn from other parts of India. 'Riches', says one of the characters, 'bring but misery, for village wants are few. And if you have more than you need, you are but thrust on evil ways.'[2] For Murugan prosperity meant nothing more than the multiplication of wants, good and bad; and this is all it ever means to the Indian peasant if he is left to his own devices.

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[1] According to Aristotle, the state originated in the bare needs of life and continued in existence for the sake of a good life (see *Politics*, bk. i, ch. 2).

[2] Proverbs xxx. 8.

[3] *Politics*, bk. 1, ch. 1.

[4] 1 Timothy vi. 8–10.

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[1] 'The European talks of progress because, by the aid of a few scientific discoveries, he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilization' (Disraeli, quoted by Inge, *op. cit.*, p. 179).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 254.

[4] Cf. 'The law of diminishing utility (or of satiable wants) shows that the consumption of wealth beyond a certain point gives diminishing satisfaction and finally ends in wretchedness' (Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 435).

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 388.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 92.

[7] Plutarch, *Life of Numa* (tr. Thomas North).

What the Peasant needs

Though wants should not be multiplied indefinitely, the peasant clearly needs more than he has at present. Where then should he stop? If a peasant asked us this question, we would recall to him the two hymns quoted in Chapter II[3] and say that all he needed in addition to their modest catalogue of wants is a well-ventilated house (not necessarily pukka) for his home, plainly and, if possible, beautifully furnished in the Indian style; good byres for his cattle; appropriate implements for his farming; a garden full of vegetables and flowers; a deposit with his village bank for emergencies, and such education as will make him a better husbandman and villager, and his wife a better housewife and woman. If he can get these few things—few in comparison with western requirements—and if his village is kept clean, and has a good mullah or priest, a convenient bathing place, good drinking water, a playground for the children and a small library for others, and such other institutions as it needs, he will have all that is necessary for the good life.

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[1] See the author's *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[2] K. S. Venkataramani, *Murugan the Tiller*, 1927, p. 57.

[3] p. 36.

But how, it may be asked, does this differ from the gospel of gain, which would also prescribe these as desirable ends? The difference at the outset is mainly one of emphasis. With the gospel of gain such emphasis is laid upon the acquisition of money that 'in nine-tenths of the activities of life' appeal is made to the money motive.[1] But with the gospel of sufficiency, it is laid upon the acquisition of specific goods so carefully selected as to be almost identical with good itself. The conventional course in persuading the villager to adopt some new nostrum or make some greater effort is to try to convince him that it will bring him more money. A sounder method would be not to appeal to the money motive at all, but to inspire him with the desire for a cleaner village, better health, or some form of education, and then come forward with the nostrum as the means to that end. In this way his mind will not be centred upon money, which may very well become a root of evil, but upon something so worth having that he will willingly make the necessary effort to obtain it. And, since his needs will be few, he will learn to desire quality rather than quantity, beauty rather than ugliness. We have seen the great difference in this respect between the east and the west of the Punjab. Poor as the west is, again and again there we found interiors so scrupulously clean, neatly arranged, and appropriately furnished, that there seemed no reason why sufficiency should not go hand in hand with beauty and the most slender means. And when in passing through Delhi I saw the Shah-Nishin of the Emperor Shahjahan, I could see no reason why sufficiency should not also go hand in hand with beauty and wealth; for here was an almost complete absence of furniture, but everything in the room—rugs, cushions, huqqa, dagger, and sword—was beautiful of its kind and appropriate to the station of a man who ruled an empire. In sad contrast was the guest-house of a wealthy landowner seen a year or two ago. Furnished in the European style, the drawing-room was blocked with tables, chairs, sofas, and every kind of ornament, knick-knack, and photograph, the last in immense and no doubt costly frames. Here was a case of superfluity allied to wealth and producing an almost suffocating feeling upon the mind.

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[1] Keynes, *A Short View of Russia*, p. 26.

Service

Some may think the gospel of sufficiency too soft an ideal to be placed before a virile peasantry. Even if it stood alone, this would not be so for most, since few have reached the standard of living implied by sufficiency, or can hope to reach it for many years. But linked with service it is sufficiently exacting for all. When a man is working for himself and his family, he will always be ready to lend a helping hand to his neighbours, and when he has acquired enough, he will continue to work for others. There is no reason, therefore, why he should not work as hard as those who follow gain; but even if he works less hard, it is a small price to pay for the benefits likely to accrue—to himself a more contented mind, to his fellows a share in his prosperity, and to the village an atmosphere uncontaminated by envy or greed. No one, for instance, could have grudged the wealthy Rajput shopkeeper of Ramba his wealth when they saw him spending Rs. 16,000 upon the hallowed places of the village.[1] But the inhabitants of the tumbledown village we passed in the riverain of the Sutlej might well have been moved to unrighteous envy at the sight of the two-storied mansion built by the rich carpenter on his return from East Africa.[2] 'If', says Tawney, 'economic ambitions are good servants, they are bad masters,' but 'harnessed to a social purpose, they will turn the mill and grind the corn'.[3] In India, where perforce only the few can become rich, it is doubly necessary that men should feel themselves under a strong religious or social obligation to use part of their wealth for the advantage of all.

There is no need to emphasize the value of service.

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[1] p. 109.

[2] p. 47.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

In the West it is perhaps the only old ideal which is the stronger for the war. In the East the village community could not have flourished long without it. It agrees therefore as well with the old light as with the new; and in India, thanks to the old light, it is still vigorous. All over the Punjab we have found the villager well accustomed to serve a neighbour, or it may be the whole village, in time of need. Seeing that 90 per cent of India's 320 millions live in villages, it is of the utmost importance that this community spirit should be kept alive. Without it the village community can hardly hope to survive the age that is approaching; and, if more immediate justification is desired, it is indispensable to the success of Co-operation. Every co-operative society depends to a large extent upon the service of the best of its members; and as there are now nearly 20,000 societies in the province, and each society requires at least five members for its committee of management, even allowing for those who serve on more than one committee, there must be over 80,000 who are working for their fellows without remuneration of any kind. And twice this number will be required in the future if the rural reconstruction of the Punjab is to be carried out on co-operative lines.

Co-operation

In its essence the co-operative system is but the concrete expression of the gospel of sufficiency and service. Its watchword—each for all and all for each—exactly expresses the gospel of service; and if it does not directly preach sufficiency, at least it sets a limit at every point to the greed of man. In addition, it insists, so far as it can, on the old doctrine of the just price; it demands that the strong shall not pursue their ends at the expense of the weak, or the intelligent at the expense of the ignorant; and it calls upon the rich to help the poor, and the wise to guide the foolish. It is therefore a happy synthesis of the old light and the new, borrowing the idea of mutual help and sufficiency from the old, the idea of self-help and effort from the new, and the idea of service from both. The weakness of the old light is that it is accompanied by poverty, the danger of the new that it may lead to materialism. Co-operation offers the peasant the best, perhaps the only, way of escape from poverty, and by its ideal of service sets up an effective barrier against materialism. For the nineteenth-century ideal of economic liberty or *laissez-faire*, which is quite unsuited to the Indian village with its community life, it substitutes the ideal of a well-balanced inter-dependence between man and man. And having a strong corporate life of its own, it is opposed to the communalism that poisons life in many towns; and if, as this diary shows, communalism has made but little headway in the village, it is largely because co-operation, backed by the village community spirit, has been there to resist it. Finally, being something more than a system of business, it touches social as well as economic life—witness the societies for arbitration and better living—and is only less concerned than religion that men should live the good life in the fullest sense of the word.

The gospel of sufficiency and service has a message for us all, particularly perhaps for those who employ themselves in industry and business. Once embarked upon a career of money-making, few find it easy to stop, and many regard it as impossible that they should set a limit to their personal gains. Yet in Germany we have the case of Ernest Abbé. The son of a spinning-mill operative, he handed over the great Zeiss works to a trust, to which he also transferred, so far as the German law allowed, his entire personal estate, merely retaining for himself a post on the board of management of the works. The result was the introduction into the works of a number of measures for the benefit of the workers twenty years before they were commonly adopted elsewhere.[1] And lest it be said that one swallow does not make a summer, we may also quote the case of Dr. Steinmetz who recently died in America. The story is told by Dr. Jacks: 'He was a pioneer in developing the uses of electricity, a genius in that department, and for many years had been a technical expert in the service of . . . one of the great industrial corporations of America. He was reputed to be enormously rich, and many tall tales were told of his shareholdings in the company and of the colossal salary he received for his services. When his will was made public, people learned to their astonishment that all the goods he possessed in this world consisted of a workman's life policy for £300, an antiquated car, and a few other trifles. It then turned out that his shareholdings were nil, and that he had received no salary at all. By his own act and will he had refused these things. "I will do my work for its own sake," he said; "money shall have nothing to do with it."'[1] Both these men laid aside or refused wealth because they had grasped the profound truth that real freedom comes only through sufficiency and service. This is a secret which the present age is only just beginning to rediscover, but it was known to the ancient Greeks. In praising Athens Pericles said: 'Through effort and suffering . . . we have found out the secret of human power, which is the secret of happiness. Men have guessed at it under many names; but we alone have learnt to know it and to make it at home in our city. And the name we know it by is freedom, for it has taught us that to serve is to be free.'[2]

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[1] See the author's article on the subject in *The Irish Economist*, July 1923, p. 198.

It may be said that it is unnecessary to preach to the peasant any gospel at all, and that his future may be left to the play of natural forces. This would certainly be in accordance with the standpoint of the nineteenth century in the West; but, as we have seen, the twentieth has begun to think differently. In India we may well think differently too, for a system of economics divorced from religion is not likely to suit the Indian peasant. 'I have lived constantly in Indian villages,' says Mr. C. F. Andrews, 'not as an outsider and a stranger, but as an inmate. . . . Thus I have come to know, at first hand, the deep penetration which the Hindu religion has made into every part of the social fabric.'[1] And much the same appears to be true of the Punjab peasant. One of those who know him best, an Indian, writes to me as follows: 'The more you talk with the people about the place of religion in life, the more tenaciously they cling to the idea of its being the principal factor: to them anything apart from religion is not non-religious but irreligious.' The same person says that in his frequent discussions with intelligent villagers he finds that the modification of the old standards is generally regarded as a sign of degeneration rather than progress, and that Hindus who sell their cows, Sikhs who cultivate tobacco, and Muhammadans who take interest often have a sense of guilt, which made a Muhammadan friend of his say that, though money-lending had made his life 'easy and comfortable', in his heart he felt he had done something 'unworthy of a man'. When conscience comes into conflict with material advantage, a man follows the latter at his peril; and it does not take much spiritual insight to see that those who sell their cattle on the sly, as we found them doing in Gurgaon, are doing themselves harm rather than good. At the same time, the wise man, when faced with a dilemma of this kind, should consider whether what he has been taught to regard as religion really is religion; whether, for instance, it is not sometimes more merciful to kill than to keep alive, whether the interests of the cow would not be best served by improving her breed and milking capacity regardless of the butcher's knife, and whether interest should not be distinguished from usury.

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[1] L. P. Jacks, *Constructive Citizenship*, pp. 214–15.

[2] Quoted by A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 191–2. The words appear to be a paraphrase of several passages in Thucydides. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 220. Freedom and service were also connected by the divines of the sixteenth century when they included in the prayer book of 1549 the prayer which now begins: 'O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, and *whose service is perfect freedom*.'

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[1] *Young India*, dated 21st June 1928.

Whatever then may be the case elsewhere, in India the divorce of religion and economics is likely to be injurious; for agriculture is more than the gaining of a livelihood; it is a way of life which affects mind and spirit profoundly. And if religion and economics are to be linked, could this be done better than by the gospel of sufficiency and service, in which the old light and the new are fused into one? If I have dwelt upon this aspect of the peasant's life more than an economist should, I would plead in excuse Bishop Berkeley's dictum: 'Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman.'[1]

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[1] Quoted by Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

GLOSSARY

Abat, the help given by one neighbour to another in sinking a well, &c.

Akáli, the tenth Sikh Guru gave the name to his followers as being men who would not hesitate to give their lives for the service of religion. It is now used to signify the stricter and more ardent followers of the Sikh religion.

Anna, one-sixteenth of a rupee.

Attar, essence of a flower.

Baithak, the room in a private house where men meet for talk and male guests are entertained.

Bajra, spiked millet (*holcus spicatus*).

Bania, the most important trading caste in the southern Punjab: also applied generally to any Hindu shopkeeper.

Bár, table-land between two rivers.

Baráni, land entirely dependent upon rain.

Barát, the bridegroom's party when he escorts the bride to his house.

Begár, labour given in lieu of a cash payment, cf. *corvée*.

Ber, *Zizyphus jujuba*.

Bheli, a two-wheeled conveyance, half cart, half carriage.

Birádari, literally brotherhood, but applied to all who have common family ties, however distant.

Burga, white cotton cloak with hood worn by Muhammadan pardahnishin ladies to conceal them from head to foot: the hood has eye-holes.

Chaddar, a cotton sheet worn like a plaid.

Chahwela, literally butter-milk time, i.e. the first meal, at which butter-milk is usually drunk.

Chamár, a tanner.

Chapati, a girdle cake of unleavened bread.

Charpoy, a wooden bed covered with netted string or webbing (*newar*).

Charsa, a leather bucket (with rope) used for drawing up water.

Chicks, blinds of split reed to keep out flies.

Chilkána, the discount retained by a money-lender when making a loan.

Cho, the sandy bed of a hill torrent, generally dry except during the monsoon.

Chowpal, meeting hall of the village or of part of it.

Chula, a fire-place made of mud-plastered earth.

Crore, 100 lakhs, i.e. 10 million rupees; at 1*s*. 6*d*. to the rupee, worth £750,000.

Dál, pulse boiled with spice.
Deg, large vessels for cooking rice.
Dharmsala, Hindu or Sikh place of worship.
Dhoti, a cloth tied round the waist and hanging down to the knees with the ends passed between the legs and fastened at the back.
Dhurry, cotton carpet.

Fakir, Muhammadan ascetic.

Ghi, clarified butter.
Gowshala, almshouse for aged or infirm cattle.
Gram, a pulse (*cicer arietinum*).
Granthi, Sikh priest.
Granth Sahib, the Sikh Bible.
Gujar, a semi-pastoral tribe, partly Hindu, partly Muhammadan.
Gur, unrefined sugar.
Gurdwára, a Sikh place of worship.
Guru, a religious teacher.

Hakím, a doctor practising the Yunani system of medicine: generally, but not always, a Muhammadan.
Hawadár, well ventilated, airy.

Id, the festival at the end of the Ramzan fast.
Idgah, the place where the Id prayers are said.
Imám, a person who conducts the Muhammadan prayers.
Izzat, a word for which there is no precise English equivalent, denoting, objectively, social position, and subjectively, *amour propre*.

Jagír, an assignment of land revenue.
Jagirdar, a person to whom an assignment of land revenue has been made.
Jal, *Salvadora oleoides*.
Jand, *Prosopis spicigera*.
Jangal, uncultivated land with vegetation not necessarily either thick or tropical.
Jawár, great millet (*holcus sorghum*).
Jhiwar, Hindu water-carrier.

Kachha, applied to a house not made of stone or burnt bricks; the opposite of pukka.
Kanál, generally one-eighth of an acre, but in some districts one-ninth or less.
Khaddar, homespun cloth.
Kharif, the autumn harvest.

Khatri, the most important Hindu trading and banking caste in the Punjab.
Kikar, *Acacia Arabica.*
Kismet, fate.
Kothi, a receptacle for grain.

Lakh, 100,000 rupees; at 1*s.* 6*d.* to the rupee, worth £7,500.
Lambardar, village headman.

Mahant, the head of a Hindu or Sikh shrine.
Makki, maize.
Mantra, a saying taken from one of the holy books of the Hindus.
Maulvi, one learned in the Muhammadan scriptures.
Maund, 82·28 lb.
Merla, the twentieth part of a kanal.
Mirási, a beggar minstrel.
Mohalla, a section of a village or ward of a town.
Mung, a pulse (*phaseolus mungo*).
Mureed, the follower of a pir.

Nautch, dancing and singing.

Panch, member of a panchayet.
Panchayet, a board for settling village questions or disputes.
Parát, a broad open metal dish for kneading dough.
Pardah, literally a veil; metaphorically, concealment.
Patti, a section of a village.
Patwari, a village accountant.
Phulkári, embroidered hanging.
Pice, one-fourth of an anna.
Pipal, *Ficus religiosa.*
Pir, a Muhammadan religious leader.
Piri-mureedi, literally to play the part of pir to mureeds; i.e. to tour and collect alms from followers in return for charms.
Prohit, a Hindu family priest.
Puja, Hindu devotions.
Pujári, a Hindu temple priest.
Pukka, as applied to a road, metalled; as applied to a house, made of stone or burnt bricks.

Rabi, the spring harvest.
Roti, literally bread, but includes everything that is eaten with it.
Rupee, valued throughout the book at 1*s.* 6*d.*

Sadhu, a Hindu who professes to be an ascetic.
Ság, boiled greens, made of the leaves of rape, gram, &c.

Sahukar, professional money-lender.
Sarson, rape, *Brassica campestris var. glauca.*
Seer, one-fortieth part of a maund, about 2 lb.
Settlement, the periodic revision of the land revenue assessment, made district by district.
Seyyed, a Muhammadan tribe claiming descent from the Prophet.
Shariat, the canon law of Islam.
Shastras, the holy books of the Hindus.
Shisham, *Dalbergia sissu.*
Sirkar, Government.
Square, a unit of land, in a canal colony measuring either 25 or 27·8 acres: in the Lyallpur colony it measures the latter.
Sufedposh, a rural notable of the yeoman type intermediate in status between lambardar and zaildar.

Tahsil, a section of a district.
Takia, a place of meeting; cf. *chowpal.*

Zail, a group of villages at the head of which is a zaildar.
Zaildar, the headman of a zail.
Zakát, the yearly charity given away made by Muhammadans according to a prescribed scale.
Zemindar, (as used in the Punjab) a landowner, however small.

INDEX

Ábat system, 17, 174. See *Lás*, *Mang*, *Mangáli*.
Accounts, 111, 229–30, 241, 253, 269, 270.
Acquisitive spirit, 204, 239, 375. *See* gain.
Administration, peasants' knowledge of, 309, 314–15.
Adult school, 7.
Afghanistan, 76, 79, 110, 254, 272, 369.
Agricultural College, Lyallpur, 204.
  Department, 216, 251, 253, 354.
  Labourer in Attock, 301, 313; Lyallpur, 261–2; Multan, 258, 261–2; Muzaffargarh, 277, 282; Punjab, 334.
  Progress, 121, 188, 205, 216, 220, 225, 294, 335, 353. *See* chaff-cutters, implements, seed.
Agriculturist money-lender, *see* money-lender.
Ahimsa, 146, 370, 372.
Ajmer-Merwara, 139 (*n.*), 374.
Alexander, 1, 283, 316.
Alms, 172, 203, 232. *See* beggars, pirs, service, Zakát.
Ambala, 55 ff.
Andrews, C. F., 21 (*n.*), 385.
Animals, blessing of, *see* blessing.
  damage to crops by, *see* game, monkeys, rats.
Arains, 51, 162–4, 182, 207, 210–11.
Arain women, 7, 207–8.
Arbitration societies, 113–15, 271, 301, 306–8.
Army, service in, 2, 14, 24, 28, 30, 57, 102, 161, 198, 200, 298, 313, 331.
Aroras, 230, 233, 252, 265.
Art, 50, 130, 187, 233. *See* beauty.
Arya Samajh, 10, 62.
Ashley, W. J., 364–5 (*n.*), 378.
Astrologers, 20, 25, 232.
Auspicious numbers, 246, 302.
Austria, 6 (*n.*), 16 (*n.*), 208, 325, 327, 334 (*n.*), 351.
Bands, 25, 32, 147, 164, 175, 180.
Bania, 83, 91, 137, 139, 142, 150–1. *See* grain dealings.
Banks, *see* central, mortgage, and village banks.
Banoti, 278.
Bar, 214, 236, 249.
Barter, 178.
Baskets, 118, 131, 140, 178, 263, 275, 282, 359.
Beas, 1, 7.
Beauty, absence of, 46, 162, 202, 253, 347.
  feeling for, 26, 120, 225, 316.
  in architecture, 100, 108, 138, 150, 252, 348.
  in interiors, 220, 225, 348.
Beggars, 139, 145, 152, 171–2, 202, 289–90. *See* Sadhus.
Belgium, 177.
Benares State, 289 (*n.*).
Bengal, 124.
Better Living societies, 4, 5, 60, 65, 69, 70, 111, 203, 207, 209, 229, 233, 249, 343.
Bhatti Rajputs, 229.
Bikaner, 29, 31, 33, 43, 181.
Biloch, 221.
Birth, 14, 135, 217, 275. *See* midwives.
  control, 38–9, 168, 209, 373.
Blessing of animals and cars, 282–3.
Boats, 1, 275, 283.
Bombay, 250 (*n.*).
Books, *see* reading.
Boy Scouts, 76–7, 167.
Brahmins, 8, 11, 22, 73, 139, 232.
Brayne, F. L., 121 ff., 153 ff., 348, 356.
  Mrs., 122–3, 159.
Brides, sale of, 7, 31, 40–1, 60, 153, 308.
Buckets for well, 174, 216. *See* Persian wheels.
Buffaloes, 19, 97, 119, 297, 316.
Bulls, *see* cattle breeding, Hissar bulls.
Bullocks, 19, 97, 183, 197.

Bundala, 168 ff., 347.
Burdizzo castrator, 97.

Canal colonies, 2, 192, 198, 201, 203, 236.
Canals, 54, 251, 253, 355.
  inundation, 265–6.
  water, 198, 216, 224.
Capital, 30, 216, 233, 362. *See* emigration.
Capri, 320.
Carting, 2, 46, 71.
Carts in Jhang, 234. *See* transport.
Caste, *see* occupations.
Castration, 19, 80, 97, 105, 342.
Cattle, and wells, 126.
  breeding, 97–8, 104–6, 124, 306, 315.
  disease, 20, 84, 107, 170, 195, 221, 232, 342.
  feeding of, 102, 105, 115, 131, 194, 313, 315.
  housing of, 48, 99, 101, 130, 219, 239.
  importance of, in Jhang, 228.
  offerings to, 20, 93, 133, 184.
  price of, 127, 133, 145.
  sale of, 19, 62, 97, 104, 108, 119, 133–4, 182–4, 317, 343, 372.
  sanctity of, 19, 371.
  theft, 82, 227–8, 236, 274, 299.
  See castration, Hissar bulls.
Central co-operative banks, 226.
Chaff-cutters, 194, 204–5, 216, 220.
Chamars, 11, 24, 41, 116, 135, 139, 144, 165, 200, 262. *See* untouchability.
Character and finance, 81, 112, 120, 227, 312, 326–7.
Charity, *see* beggars, service.
Charms, 20, 86–7, 169, 195, 216–17, 231, 244–5, 247, 250, 262, 279, 283, 342. *See* cattle disease, magic.
Charsa, *see* Persian wheel.
Childbirth, *see* birth.
Chenab, crossing of, 274.
Chicks, 131, 200.
Chilkana, 255, 273, 275, 278, 287. *See* discount.
Chimneys, 49, 60, 130, 162, 197, 347.
China, 191, 238 (*n.*), 356.
Chitdharia, 308.
Churning, 49, 193.
Chos, 23, 83, 90.
Chowpals, 95, 108, 116, 130, 148.
Clapham, Professor J. H., 335 (*n.*).
Cleanliness, 12, 99, 130, 188, 219, 225, 239–40, 282, 297, 300. *See* laundry, sanitation.
Clothes in Ambala, 76, 86; Attock, 297, 300–1, 313, 317; Gurgaon, 136, 144, 149; Hoshiarpur, 4, 25, 50; Lyallpur, 193; Multan, 259; Muzaffargarh, 281.
  See Gandhi, homespun, spinning.
Communalism, 22, 33–4, 63, 106, 138, 211, 271, 383. *See* Hindus.
Compulsion, 80, 129, 156–7.
Compulsory education, 78, 222.
Consolidation, *see* holdings.
Contentment, 378–84.
Co-operation, 5, 22, 34, 323.
  earliest forms of, 18, 270.
  indigenous, 17, 33, 53, 72, 78, 115, 119, 137, 140–1, 212, 319.
  influence of, 68, 323, 331.
  in Gurgaon, 119.
  in Karnal, 112.
  principles of, 365, 382.
  service for, 382.
  See adult school, arbitration, better living, central banks, compulsory education, crop failure relief, mortgage banks, reclamation, village banks, women's societies.
Co-operative societies, illiteracy in, 97.
Cotton, 6.
Cows, 19, 20, 183–4, 371.
  ploughing with, 315–16.
Credit, 224, 248, 256, 317, 327. *See* interest rates.
Criminal tribes, 221.
Crop failure relief societies, 5.
Crops, 16.
Curses, 289–90. *See* beggars.
Custom, 79, 152, 175, 182, 224, 251, 341, 365–6, 373–4.

Dahbir system, 255, 282.
Dasuya tahsil, 2–8.
Dealings with money-lenders, 6, 112.
Debt in Ambala, 81; Attock, 293, 316; Gurgaon, 142; Hoshiarpur, 5; Jhang, 215, 223–4, 228, 235, 248; Karnal, 115; Lyallpur, 204; Multan, 255, 264; Muzaffargarh, 282.
Demonstration plot, 225.
  train, 253.
Deposits, 31, 226, 368.
Depressed areas, 345–6.
Dhanni cattle, 306.
Dharmsala, 171, 174.
Dhoby, *see* laundry.
Diet, *see* food.
Discount, 142, 248. See *Chilkana.*
Disease, *see* cattle, health, inoculation.
Dispensaries, 169, 221, 232, 241.
Doctors, 47, 61, 86–8, 90, 94, 117, 139, 169–70, 195, 231, 234, 269, 342. *See* Yunani medicine.
Domestic industries, *see* home industries.
Doughty, C. M., 247, 291, 319.
Dowry, 257.
Drills, 205, 216.
Drinking, 32.
Drought, 102, 140, 142, 144, 214, 293.
Dung-cakes, 49, 59, 102, 118, 162, 190, 200, 219, 263, 314, 355.
  waste from use of, 356.
Dutch East Indies, 329.
Dutt, Mr. G. S., 124.

Early marriage, *see* marriage, age of.
Economics and religion, *see* religion.
Educated landowners, 34, 44, 232, 260, 266, 272, 276, 306.
Education, 9, 82, 88, 111, 212, 232–3, 267, 358. *See* adult school, compulsory education, educated landowners, religious teaching, schools.
  and progress, 107, 203, 209, 260, 276, 284, 302, 331.
Education and service, 66, 358.
  for girls, 13, 88, 110, 122, 154, 176, 196, 222.
  of the cultivator, 9, 42–4, 180, 198–9, 222, 233.
  influence of, 48.
  primary, 311–12.
Eggs, 2, 263.
Elections, 22, 63, 75, 211–12, 271.
Embezzlements, 227, 248, 312.
Embroidery, 89, 98, 118, 210, 352.
Emigration, 2, 28–30, 32, 43, 47, 55, 161–2, 166, 178, 181, 215 (Western Punjab), 320, 362–3.
Eothen, 18, 170, 214–15 (*n.*).
Ethics, 107, 166. *See* religion.
Excommunication, 19, 97.
Extravagance, 68, 228, 295. *See* marriages, expenditure on.

Faction, 33, 106, 308.
Factory, 202.
Fairs, 90, 94, 155.
Farming, 181, 191, 197, 286, 294, 334, 353. See *lana.*
  better, 181, 237–8, 249, 354.
Fatalism, 37, 107, 203, 221, 343, 371.
Feudal dues, 23, 264, 293.
Feudalism, 296.
Finance, *see* capital, character, village banks.
Floods, 2, 46, 277, 290.
Fodder, *see* cattle, grazing.
Food in Ambala, 59, 86; Attock, 299, 313, 317; Gurgaon, 136, 142–3; Hoshiarpur, 4, 16, 50; Jullundur, 167; Lyallpur, 194, 199; Multan, 258–9; Muzaffargarh, 281–2, 285; Punjab, 345. *See* meat, tea, vegetables, wheat.
Fragmentation of land, 30, 32, 73. *See* consolidation.
France, 16 (*n.*), 133 (*n.*), 162 (*n.*), 208 (*n.*), 283, 335.
Freedom, economic, 383.
  and service, 384.
Frost, 277.
Fruit, 33, 44, 46, 63, 172, 204, 216, 237, 241. *See* mango trees.
Fuel, 190, 219, 355. *See* dung-cakes.

Funerals, assistance at, 17, 319; expenditure on, 60, 135, 149–50, 228, 300, 343.
Furniture, *see* possessions.

Gaddis, 7.
Gain, gospel of, 375, 380.
Game, 63, 95.
Gandhi, Mr., 4, 21 (*n.*), 70, 99, 152–3, 163, 167, 177, 193, 313, 317, 343, 348, 350, 361, 370 (*n.*), 372, 375.
Gardens, 202, 252.
Garshankar tahsil, 28 ff.
Germany, 294–5, 325, 334–5.
Ghaggar, 67.
Ghi, 55, 84, 228, 281, 285, 297, 299, 300, 314, 316, 360.
Girls, 61, 135, 217, 233. *See* brides, education, marriage, religious teaching.
Goldsmiths in Lyallpur colony, 207.
Government, 106. *See* administration.
Gowshala, 133, 172, 183–4.
Grand Trunk Road, 116, 315, 319.
Granthi, 95, 196.
Grain dealings with money-lenders, 136, 255, 277, 281, 285, 315.
Gratitude (in colonies), 210.
Grazing, 105, 315.
Grinding, 13, 50, 58, 77, 78, 89, 98, 103–4, 110, 118, 163, 193, 235, 350.
Gurdwara, 191, 196, 201.
Gurgaon, 119 ff.
  Experiment, 69, 121 ff., 129, 138–40, 153 ff.

Hakíms, 86.
Handpumps, 254.
Hathin, 137.
Hazara, 315.
Health, 342, 346, 350. *See* disease, ventilation.
Hedges, 8, 11, 92.
Himalayas, 1, 7–9, 24, 57, 64, 73, 86, 282, 310, 369.
Hindu customs observed by Muhammadans, 22, 150.
Hinduism, 160, 369–70, 373.
Hindus, relations of, with Muhammadans, 22, 42, 62–3, 75, 137, 144, 284, 288.
Hindu undivided families, 12.
Hindustan, 55, 67, 160.
Hissar bulls, 98, 124, 127, 133, 145, 148, 154–5, 158, 165, 194.
Holdings, consolidation of, 29, 30, 32, 188–90, 347, 353.
  economic, 84, 199, 292, 321, 353 (*n.*).
  in Punjab, 355.
  size of, in Hoshiarpur, 2, 5, 14, 27–8, 30, 43; Jullundur, 161.
Home industries, 2, 14, 15, 71, 98, 359. *See* baskets, Gandhi, ghi, lac, leisure, sericulture.
Homespun, 3, 6, 51, 70–1, 77, 99, 118, 257, 361.
Horse-breeding, 307.
Horses, love of, 62, 373.
Hoshiarpur, 1 ff.
Hospitality, 78, 228–30. *See* travellers.
Houses, arrangement of, 240, 253.
  in, Ambala, 60; Attock, 297–8, 300, 318; eastern Punjab, 346–7; Gurgaon, 130; Hoshiarpur, 11, 41, 47, 48–9; Jhang, 220, 225, 239; Jullundur, 162, 190; Karnal, 99, 100; Lyallpur, 194–5, 196–7, 200; Multan, 252–3, 274; Muzaffargarh, 281.
  kachha and pukka, contrasted, 49, 179.

Implements, 205, 216, 235. *See* chaff-cutters, drills, farming, ploughs.
India, number dependent on agriculture in, 374.
  religion and economics in, 366.
Individualism, 12, 34, 106, 342. *See* gain, light.
Indus, crossing of, 282–4.
Industries, *see* home industries.
Inge, Dean, 376.
Inoculation, 60, 71, 107–8, 342.
Insecurity, 112, 259, 265.

Interest, 185–7.
  rates, 24, 74, 81, 94, 103, 136, 141, 205, 233, 248, 255, 275, 278, 285, 287, 315–16, 321; in the Punjab, 328–31; urban, 330.
Islam, 366–8, 373.
Italy, 33, 283, 335, 351 (*n*.), 362.
  peasant in, 320–2, 363.
Izzat, 13, 16, 51, 78, 252, 255.

Janglis, 211, 220.
Japan, 143, 191.
Jats, 51, 68, 103, 129, 135, 253 (*n*.).
  Hindu, 6, 55, 116–19, 129.
  Muhammadan, 210.
  Sikh, 2, 4, 27, 59, 167, 182, 207, 210.
Java, 329.
Jewellery, in Ambala, 59, 70, 89; Attock, 298, 321; Hoshiarpur, 4; Jhang, 229; Karnal, 102, 111, 118; Lyallpur, 206, 209; Multan, 252, 257, 269; Punjab, 343.
Jhang district, 213, 214 ff., 231.
Jhiwars, 93, 178.
Jinns, 242, 246–7, 273, 288.
Jullundur district, 160 ff.
Jumna, 55, 67, 102, 126.
Junkers, 294, 334–5.

Kamboh Sikhs, 207.
Kangra, 7, 21.
Karma, 370.
Karnal city, 117.
  district, 92 ff., 112.
Keynes, J. M., 376, 380.
Khaddar, *see* homespun.
Kharar tahsil, 55 ff.
Khattars, 295, 311.
Khojas, 186, 298.
Koran, 3, 109, 182, 254.
Kot estate, 299 ff.
Kulu, 75.

Lac, 15, 359.
Laissez-faire, 364, 383.
Lana system, 115.
Land Alienation Act, 248, 286, 294, 325–6.
  hunger for, 252.
  living on 32, 45, 187, 219, 234, 299, 300, 314.
  price of, 237.
  purchase of, by landlords, 286, 294, 326.
Landlords, absentee, 205–6, 257, 265.
Landlords, in Ambala, 83; Attock, 293 ff., 306; colonies, 333; Dera Ghazi Khan, 286–7; Europe, 295, 335; Hoshiarpur, 18, 23, 296; Jhang, 227 ff., 236; Karnal and Rohtak, 107; Lyallpur, 204; Mianwali, 291; Multan, 263 ff., 275; Muzaffargarh, 276, 286–7, 332; Punjab, 331 ff., 353; western Punjab, 333.
  influence of, 204, 214, 266, 278, 287, 296.
  non-agriculturist, 83, 230, 265–6, 286, 333.
  obligations of, 333–4.
  land purchase by, 286, 294, 326.
Land Revenue, 198, 227 (*n*.).
Lás system, 151. See *ábat*.
Laundry, 65–6, 144. *See* clothes.
Leisure, 71, 313, 360. *See* work.
Libraries, 60, 88, 260.
Light, the old and the new, 91, 103, 139, 251, 340–1, 343, 348, 363, 376–7, 382–3.
Linlithgow Commission, 106.
Litigation, 2, 47, 59, 85, 113.
Lorries, 16, 31, 44, 58, 79, 87, 196, 206, 250, 331.
Lyall, Sir Alfred, 370.
Lyallpur colony, 192 ff., 214.

Magic, 170. *See* charms.
Mahajans, 109.
Malwa, 175.
Mang, 116.
Mangáli system, 319. See *ábat*.
Mango trees, 2, 15, 82, 101, 216, 237, 264–6, 277, 282, 286.
Manjha, 175.
Mantras, 20, 232.
Manure, 33, 38, 48, 80, 138, 162, 190, 193, 219, 238, 321, 355. *See* dung-cakes.

Manure pits, 122, 124–6, 129, 138, 148, 154–5, 158, 194–5, 298.
Market-gardening, 191. *See* vegetables.
Marketing, 51, 70, 75, 90, 142. *See* grain dealings.
Marriage, 9, 11, 15. *See* polyandry, polygamy.
  age of, 40, 58, 70, 103, 110, 182, 209, 317, 321, 343.
  expenditure on, in Ambala, 60, 70; Attock, 297, 300; Capri, 321; Gurgaon, 136, 149; Hoshiarpur, 4, 7, 23–4, 31; Jhang, 228–9, 249; Jullundur, 163, 165, 181; Karnal, 102, 118; Multan, 257, 269, 272; Muzaffargarh, 278; Punjab, 343. *See* better living, brides, jewellery.
Materialism, 374, 383.
Maulvis, 234, 284, 303.
Meat, 90, 102, 142, 199, 258–9, 281, 285, 297, 321. *See* food.
Mehtons, 30, 328.
Menials, village, 65.
Meos, 140–1, 149–50, 152.
Mianwali, 291, 315.
Middle Ages, economics in, 364.
Midwives, 39, 61, 72, 110, 117, 139, 145, 169, 202, 249, 275, 280, 349.
Miracles, 147, 268.
Missionaries, 59, 78, 176, 352.
Money-lenders, agriculturist, 2, 102, 186–7, 206, 324, 326.
  and tribal system, 75, 315.
  in Ambala, 74–5; Gurgaon, 137, 141; Hoshiarpur, 5, 7, 18, 24; Italy, 33; Jhang, 223, 230, 233, 236, 248; Karnal, 111–12; Lyallpur, 206; Multan, 251, 271; Muzaffargarh, 276; Punjab, 323 ff., 332.
  influence of, 214, 266, 276, 278, 287, 324–6.
  Muhammadan, 186, 368.
  professional, 33, 73–4, 323–5, 330. *See* debt, grain dealings, interest rates.
Money, western attitude towards, 380.
Monkeys, 92, 95, 119, 372.
Monogamy, 368.
Mortgage banks, 80, 227, 291–2, 325–7.
Mortgages, 178.
Moses, 69.
Mosques, 97, 109, 140, 150, 234, 240, 260. *See* mullahs.
Muhammadans and interest, 185–7, 367–8.
  relations of, with Hindus, *see* Hindus.
Mullahs, 3, 45, 60–1, 84, 109, 140, 144, 151, 161, 164, 211, 218–19, 235, 268, 279, 291, 298, 302 ff., 338.
Multan city, 251, 259.
  district, 251 ff.
Murshids, 218, 249, 301.
Musalli, 219, 263.
Music, 175. *See* bands.
Musical instruments, 9, 91, 147, 164, 175.
Muzaffargarh, 276 ff., 345.

Nanak, Guru, 233, 320.
Naraingarh tahsil, 67 ff.
Needlework, 110, 118, 176, 210, 352. *See* embroidery.
Newspapers, 212, 233.
Nightsoil, 191, 263, 356.
Nomad life in western Punjab, 214–15, 218–19, 223–4, 285, 292.
North-West Frontier, 75. *See* Hazara.

Oaths, 106, 132.
Occupations, 56. *See* supplementary occupations.
Ostracism, 19, 97.

Palwal, 137.
  fair, 155.
Panchayets, 106, 141, 152, 311.
Panchayet Act, 134, 234.
Pantheism, 370, 373.
Pardah, in Ambala, 64–5, 76, 79, 89; Attock, 298, 314; Gurgaon, 140; Hoshiarpur, 13, 52; Jhang, 249; Jullundur, 182; Karnal,

103, 110; Lyallpur, 210; Multan, 254, 268–9, 272; Muzaffargarh, 284–5; Punjab, 349–50; Rohtak, 103.
Peasant and religion, 385. *See* Sikhs.
  character of, preface, 27, 239, 331, 363. *See* character.
  in Europe, 363. *See* Austria, France, Italy.
  needs of, 35–6, 379.
Persian pedlars, 310.
  wheels, 124, 126–7 (*n.*), 138, 154–5, 158, 174.
Pigs, 321, 357.
Pilgrimages, 3, 262, 366.
Pipal, *see* trees.
Piri-mureedi, 220, 236, 245–6, 272, 302, 318.
Pirs, in Attock, 301–2, 318; Central Punjab, 3, 204; Dera Ghazi Khan, 289; Jhang, 204, 231–2, 235, 241 ff., 249; Lyallpur, 204, 211; Multan, 251, 254, 271–4; Muzaffargarh, 276, 281, 283, 288; Punjab, 336–8.
  influence of, 204, 214, 266, 278, 287, 302.
  new, 147, 262, 268.
Plague, 71, 146. *See* inoculation.
Ploughing, 57, 66, 238, 315.
Ploughs, 127, 138, 140, 154–5, 158, 205, 239, 251, 321.
Plunkett, Sir Horace, 153.
Police, 188, 299, 320, 347.
Politics, preface, 34, 106, 211–12. *See* elections.
Polyandry, 40, 209.
Polygamy, 103, 209–10, 269.
Polytheism, 268, 370.
Population, density of, in Ambala, 55; Hoshiarpur, 14, 27–8.
  female, 31.
  increase of, 181, 199 (Lyallpur), 219, 300.
Possessions, 101–11, 131, 194, 220, 225–6, 252, 281–2, 297.
Potatoes, *see* vegetables.
Poultry, in Ambala, 55–6, 78, 84, 90; Attock, 313–14, 317; Gurgaon, 136, 143; Hoshiarpur, 2; Jullundur, 164, 173; Karnal, 101, 115; Lyallpur, 199; Multan, 258, 263; Punjab, 357–8.
Poverty, attitude towards, 373–5.
  causes of, 143, 363.
  escape from, 361, 383.
  influence of, 315, 342, 344.
Prayers, 3, 34–5, 161, 211, 241, 366.
Priests, 21, 45–6, 57, 110, 117, 131–2, 338. *See* Granthi.
Prohit, 22. *See* priests.
Propaganda, 91, 122–3, 147, 157–8.
Pujári, 21. *See* priests.
Punjab, agricultural credit societies in, 81 (*n.*).
  beggars in, 199.
  civil suits in, 113 (*n.*).
  co-operative societies in, 324.
  east and west contrasted, 343–4, 352–3, 380.
  males and females in, 31 (*n.*).
Punkahs, 197, 200.

Qureshis, 232.

Rainfall, 27, 55, 67, 173, 253, 265, 292.
Rajputs, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 22–3, 50–1, 53, 55, 57, 60, 64–5, 68, 78–9, 83, 110, 182.
Ramzan, 161, 211, 307, 366.
Rats, 145.
Ravi, 253.
Rawal Pindi district, 315.
Reading, 31, 101.
Receipts, 142.
Reclamation, *see* chos.
Religion, 34, 161, 284, 385.
  and economics, 183 ff., 364 ff.
Religious teaching, in Europe, 339–40; Gurgaon, 131–2, 140; Hoshiarpur, 19, 45; Jhang, 233–4; Karnal, 96–7, 110, 117; Lyallpur, 210; Multan, 255, 268; Punjab, 338–40.
Riba, 186, 367.
Riots, 63, 134, 271.
Roads, 64, 68, 75, 87, 91, 95, 137, 174, 192, 259, 279, 319.

Rohtak, 98, 102.
Roumania, 295, 335.

Sadhus, 47, 66, 196.
Saints, 59, 73, 93.
Sakki Sarwar, 288.
Sansis, 221.
Sanitation, in Ambala, 61, 69, 80; Gurgaon, 138–9, 147–8, 153, 155; Karnal, 99; Jhang, 219; Jullundur, 163, 168; Multan, 263.
  See townlets, compulsion, manure pits, sweepers.
Sarangi, 91.
Scarcity, 132. *See* drought.
Schools, 9, 130, 148, 179, 219.
Seed, 94, 235–6, 249, 354.
Self-government, 86.
Self-taxation, *see* taxation.
Sericulture, 2, 359–60.
Service to neighbour and village, 109, 150–1, 196, 219, 268, 319, 381 ff.
  Government, 2.
Sewing-machines, 194, 210.
Seyyeds, 55, 60, 220.
Sheep, 314.
Shirras, G. F., 106 (*n.*).
Shop-keepers, 8, 11, 109, 200, 236.
Shorkot, 241.
  tahsil, 235.
Shrines, 235, 283, 288–9.
Shujabad, 265.
Sials, 234, 252.
Sikhs, 60, 96, 160–1, 176, 178, 184–5, 206 (*n.*). *See* Jats, Kamboh.
  and religion, 34.
Simon Commission, 107.
Sind, 41, 348.
Sleeman, 106, 136, 150.
Sleep, 103.
Smoking, 65, 184–5.
Snuff, 56.
Soldiering, *see* army.
Spinning, in Ambala, 58, 77, 89; Europe, 361; Gurgaon, 136, 152; Hoshiarpur, 6, 13, 51; Karnal, 98, 110, 118; Jhang, 220, 235, 240; Lyallpur, 193.
Spinning-wheel, and Mr. Gandhi, 361–2.
  cost of, 100, 194.
Square, area of, 193 (*n.*).
Standard of living, in Attock, 297, 317; Gurgaon, 122; Hoshiarpur, 4, 11, 35, 42; Jullundur, 179, 181, 183; Lyallpur, 199, 203; Muzaffargarh, 280–1; Punjab, 342, 345 ff., 368.
  importance of, 344.
  See clothes, food, houses, sufficiency.
Storage of grain, 277.
Sufficiency, 35, 203, 377 ff.
Sugar-cane, 16, 42, 73, 82, 166, 177.
Suits, civil, 113.
Suleman Hills, 281–2.
Superstition, 203, 341, 344, 370. *See* charms.
Supplementary occupations, 14, 281. *See* carting, home industries.
Sureties, 142.
Sutlej, 53, 160, 175 (*n.*).
Suttee, 20.
Sweepers, 55, 77, 99, 115, 135, 148, 168, 198, 200, 219, 263. *See* midwives, sanitation.

Tagore, Sir Rabindranath, 340, 375.
Tahsils, 81 (*n.*).
Takia, 164, 171, 174.
Tawney, R. H., 364 (*n.*), 365, 381.
Taxation, 77, 95, 129, 168, 191.
Tea, 56, 179, 297.
Tenancy, period of, 205, 252, 257–8, 260–1, 264, 274, 278, 292–3.
Tenants, 205, 228–9, 257, 264, 274, 277, 293, 297, 307.
Thomson, J. S., 255 (*n.*).
Thrift, 5, 30, 84, 118, 129, 163, 219, 237, 257, 291, 343, 354.
Tika, 21 (*n.*).
Tobacco, 56 (*n.*), 184–5.
Townlets, 63, 75, 91, 137, 168 ff., 233. *See* carting, lorries.

Toynbee, Arnold, 364–5 (*n*.), 378.
Transport, 6, 8, 42, 56 (*n*.), 67–8, 75, 91, 115. *See* carting, lorries.
Travellers, 17, 79.
Trees, sacred, 21, 93, 116, 132, 180.
Tribal system, 315.
Turkey, 371.

Udásis, 96.
Una tahsil, 8 ff.
Unemployment, 7, 358. *See* education.
United Provinces, 31, 80, 94, 328 (*n*.).
United States, rate of interest in, 331.
Untouchability, in Ambala, 62, 90; Gurgaon, 135, 144, 150; Hoshiarpur, 10; Jullundur, 165–6; Karnal, 93–4, 102, 116–17; Lyallpur, 200; Punjab, 341, 343–4.
Usury, 3, 33, 367–8. *See* debt, interest rates, money-lenders.

Vaccination, 85.
Vedic medicine, 195 (*n*.).
Vegetables, in Ambala, 57, 59, 63, 72, 90; Attock, 313; Gurgaon, 136, 143; Hoshiarpur, 4, 7, 16, 23, 28, 33, 44, 50, 51; Jullundur, 163, 172–3, 191; Karnal, 93, 101–2, 115, 118; Lyallpur, 199; Punjab, 346, 354, 372.
Vegetable specialist, 355.
Ventilation, 12, 99, 110, 130, 347.
Veterinary Department, 184.
  Dispensaries, 221, 232.
  Surgeons, 84.
Village banks, advantages of, 272.
  and debt, 316–17.
    money-lenders, 5, 112, 325.
  defaulters in, 81.
  deposits of, 31, 88.
  illiteracy in, 234–5, 241, 260, 277.
  influence of, 89, 328.
  in Ambala, 68, 88; Attock, 306, 311; Hoshiarpur, 31, 41; Jhang, 220; Jullundur, 164–5; Lyallpur, 198; Multan, 253; Muzaffargarh, 276; Punjab, 323.
Village bank by-laws, knowledge of, 136, 221, 235, 241, 260, 277.
Village community, 5, 34, 240, 341, 383–4. *See* communalism.
  guides, 124, 127–8, 154.
Villages, 27, 240, 253, 366. *See* faction, village community.

Wages, 89, 254, 302. *See* agricultural labourer, mullahs, priests, sweepers.
Wants, 215, 377, 288. *See* sufficiency.
War, 112, 259.
Waste, 354, 355. *See* extravagance.
Water, importance of, 355.
  waste of canal, 355.
  See canal water, wells.
Wealth, danger of, 379.
Weavers, 95.
Weeding, 71, 84, 258.
Wells, cost of, 27, 42, 66, 151, 216, 225, 237.
  drinking, 72, 119, 137, 192, 200, 212.
  in Ambala, 55, 59, 66; Gurgaon, 141, 151; Hoshiarpur, 27, 42–3; Jhang, 215–16, 224–5; Jullundur, 162, 173; Multan, 252, 258; Muzaffargarh, 277. *See* buckets, Persian wheels.
  sinking of, 53.
Wheat, 16, 94, 143, 281, 299.
Women, co-operative societies for, 352.
  position of, 122, 270, 275, 348–9.
  possessed, 273. *See* Jinns.
  religious teaching of, *see* brides, education, girls, jinns, marriage, midwives, pardah, religious teaching.
Women's Institutes, 124.
  work, in Ambala, 58, 64, 70–1, 77, 79; Attock, 300, 314; Capri, 321; Central Punjab, 52–3, 175–6; Gurgaon, 136, 140; Hoshiarpur, 7, 16, 49, 50–1;

Women's work (*contd.*)—
  Jhang, 220, 235, 240; Jullundur, 163, 175–6; Karnal, 98; 118; Lyallpur, 193, 198, 207–8, Multan, 270; Punjab, 350–2; Rohtak, 51, 98, 103. *See* embroidery, grinding, needlework, spinning.
Work, in Ambala, 84; Gurgaon, 140, 144; Hoshiarpur, 7; Jhang, 238; Jullundur, 162, 166, 176–7; Lyallpur, 199, 207, 212, 354 (*n.*); Multan, 258, 273; Muzaffargarh, 277.
Worship, 21, 201. *See* priests.

Young, Arthur, 57, 62, 283.
Yunani medicine, 195 (*n.*), 241. *See* doctors.

Zakát, 218, 226, 241, 254, 366, 368.
Zeiss works, 383.

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